

HORATIUS BONAR D.D.

*A MEMORIAL*

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Truly  
Horace Bonar



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HORATIUS BONAR, D.D.

A Memorial.



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## Thoratus Bonar, D.D.

Born 19th December 1808.

Ordained Minister of the North Parish (Church of Scotland), Kelso, 30th November 1837.

Joined the Free Church of Scotland, 18th May 1843, and continued Minister of that Church at Kelso.

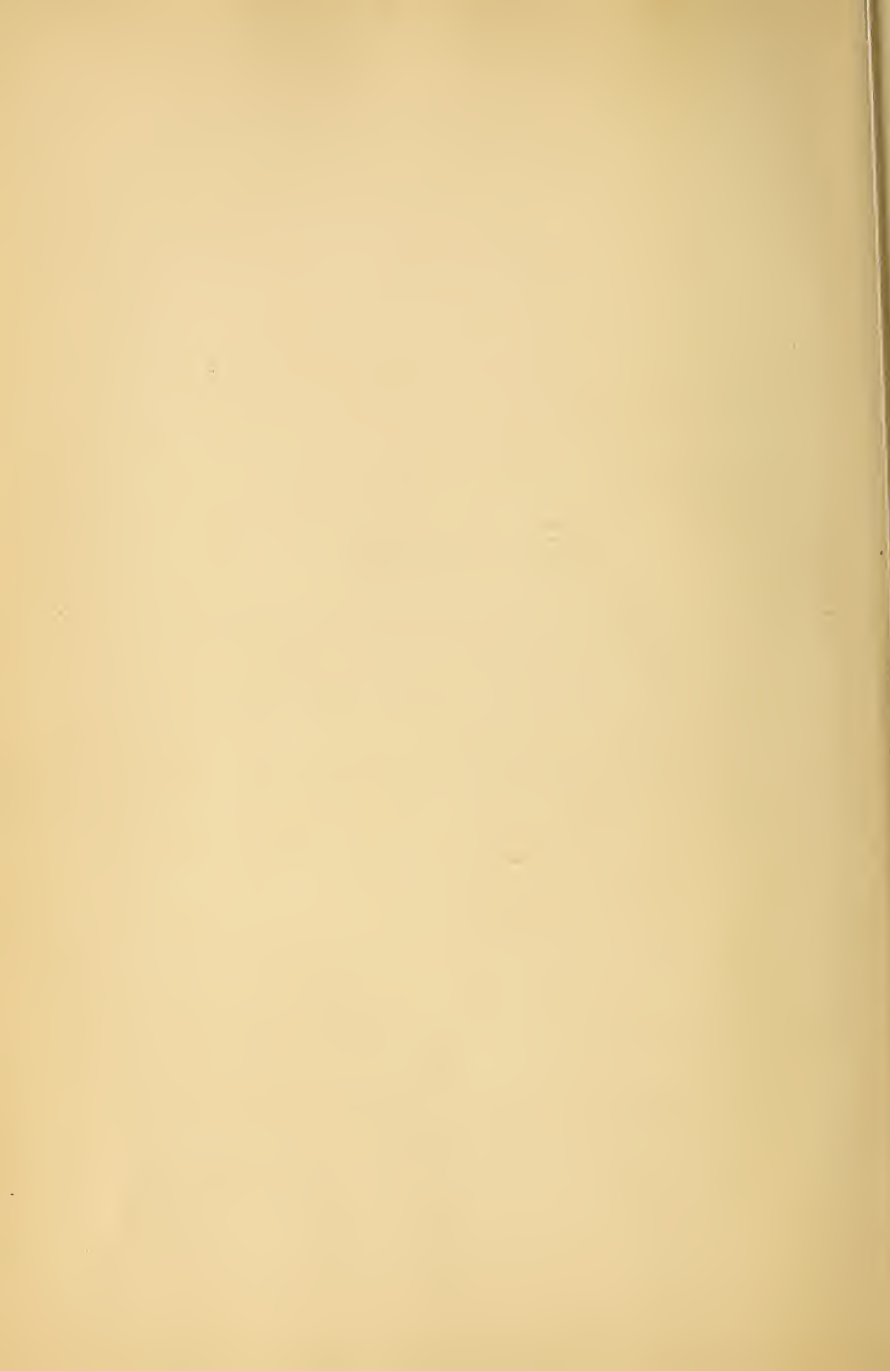
Admitted Minister of the Chalmers Memorial Church, Grange, Edinburgh, 7th June 1866.

Chosen Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1883.

Died 31st July 1889.

# Sermon

*PREACHED IN THE CHALMERS MEMORIAL CHURCH,  
GRANGE, EDINBURGH, ON THE  
FORENOON OF SABBATH, 11th AUGUST 1889,  
BY THE  
REV. R. H. LUNDIE, M.A., LIVERPOOL.*



## Sermon.

BY THE REV. R. H. LUNDIE, M.A., LIVERPOOL.

*"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them."*—ACTS viii. 5.

*"David . . . the sweet psalmist of Israel."*—2 SAM. xxiii. 1.

UNDER the shadow of a great affliction we assemble in the house of God this day. The trusted colleague, who is now sole pastor, the attached elders, deacons, and members of the flock are bereaved of one whom they loved, and whose lips fed many. You meet where once you used to greet his presence and drink in his thoughts, sorrowing most of all that you shall see his face no more. The voice, which in measured accents dealt forth its solid teaching, which, trumpet-like, rang through this church in earnest warning, and which, in tones of tenderness, wooed to the ways of peace and pleasantness the old and the young who hung upon his lips, is silent.

Yet I am not to-day to dwell on parting and death. His work was done, his warfare was accomplished; we will not mourn that he has laid his weapons down. The weariness of long pilgrimage weighed heavily upon him; we will not mourn that God has given him rest.

Turn we rather to the life which he lived, and the work which by God's grace he accomplished.

I have selected two texts as pointing to the two great lines of life on which he moved. Like Philip he "preached Christ"; like David he was a "sweet

psalmist of Israel." These two lines were distinct but mutually helpful. The ministry of the truth in word and in song was the life-work to which God called him, and for which he was singularly furnished by nature, by culture, and by grace.

He preached Christ, not doctrine only, but mainly and essentially Christ, a personal Saviour and a living Friend. The preparation for this service began early. Those who knew him best and longest scarcely remember a time when he did not appear to be under the influence of Divine things. How much he owed to his noble-minded father, who was taken from him comparatively early, and to his gentle, devoted, beloved mother, it was his joy to tell. Of a type which hardly survives to the present time, she comes back to the memory of some of us, seated in her arm chair, beaming kindness and goodness around her, the saint, the lady, and the mother. At her knee, the sons, whose praise is in all the churches, learned their first, perhaps their most abiding, lessons in the faith.

Sprung from forefathers honourable and pious, and largely clerical, Horatius Bonar gives enduring record of his gratitude,—

" I thank Thee for a holy ancestry ;  
 I bless Thee for a godly parentage ;  
 For seeds of truth and light and purity,  
 Sown in this heart from childhood's earliest age.

For word and church and watchful ministry,  
 The beacon and the tutor and the guide ;  
 For the parental hand and lip and eye,  
 That kept me far from snares on every side.

I thank Thee for a true and noble creed,  
 For wisdom, poetry, and gentle song ;  
 For the bright flower and for the wayside weed,  
 The friendship of the kind and brave and strong.

I thank the love that kept my life from sin,  
 Even when my heart was far from God and truth  
 That gave me, for a life-time's heritage,  
 The purities of unpolled youth."

The tenderness of his love to his mother is beautifully expressed in lines written on his arriving, through the delay of a train, just too late, at her death-bed,—

" Past all pain for ever ;  
 Done with sickness now ;  
 Let me close thine eyes, mother,  
 Let me smooth thy brow.  
 Rest and health and gladness,  
 These thy portion now ;  
 Let me press thy hand, mother,  
 Let me kiss thy brow."

As youth advanced, Horatius Bonar took a decided stand for Christ. And, with his strong nature and powerful will, decision had its meaning and its issues: he resolved to devote his life to the service of the Master, in the ministry of the gospel. His student days, and the days of his early ministry, were marked by close association with a group of men from his own University of Edinburgh, and from Glasgow, and from Aberdeen,—men of deep piety and of promise which has not been disappointed. Among these, besides his brothers John and Andrew, were Robert Murray M'Cheyne, William Burns, Robert M'Donald, Moody Stuart, John Milne, Patrick Miller, and A. N. Somerville, who is to preach to you this afternoon. The rooms of some of these young men became consecrated places, through the meetings that were held in them for sacred study and for prayer. Doubtless Scotland is to-day the richer for the prayers of that devoted band. In his early years Horatius Bonar owed much

to the wise and evangelical teaching of Dr. Jones, Dr. Gordon, and Dr. John Bruce, all of Edinburgh.

On taking license as a preacher, his first occupation was mission work in Leith, in connection with the church of Mr. Lewis. Two youths worked under him in the large district assigned him—viz., his brother Andrew and Dr. Thomas Smith—both of whom stood with us by the grave of their life-long friend, last Monday. A mission hall was secured, which had previously belonged to a small body of Roman Catholics. The young preacher tells us that he had scarcely begun his first service in it, when an infuriated woman entered, shouting, "My curse and the curse of God be upon you!" But the curse causeless cometh not, and God's blessing rested on the work.

In November, 1837, Horatius Bonar went to Kelso to take charge of a new church there, started in connection with Dr. Chalmers' scheme of Church Extension. In a short autobiographical paper, begun with a view to his jubilee celebration, but never completed and never used, we have his own account of the commencement and character of his labours. He says: "I found there plenty of work, plenty of workmen, and plenty of sympathy,—zealous elders, zealous teachers, and zealous friends. The key-note which I struck was, 'Ye must be born again'; and that message found its way into many hearts. It repelled some, but it drew many together, in what I may call the bond of regeneration; and I may here ask, Do we, with sufficient energy and point, proclaim that solemn truth with which our Master's ministry began, and without which all religion is hollow and superficial? 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see



the kingdom of God ;' and may not the feebleness and want of success, of which many of us have reason to complain, be traced to a lack of distinctness and precision in our announcement of this momentous message? Certainly that word did run, and was glorified." Such is the testimony of the venerable servant of the Lord as he reviewed the work of half-a-century.

He continues : " Until the Disruption came I had no access to the neighbouring parishes, but after that I found open doors and open ears in that populous district among all ranks of the people. Year after year the work grew, and the people flocked to hear." It became necessary to procure assistance. Two zealous missionaries, whom he styles " the Evangelists of the Borders," were employed. They " traversed the three counties of Roxburgh, Berwick, and Northumberland with blessed success, and the fruit of their labours remains to this day all over these Borders. . . . Whole villages " were " awakened, besides many stray souls, both young and old, gathered into the Church of God, from various quarters. . . . Many rebuffs we got, many angry letters, many threats of ecclesiastical censure ; . . . but in spite of all this, the work went on."

Sylvester, one of the contemporaries of Baxter, speaks thus of that great preacher : " When he spoke of weighty soul-concerns you might find his very spirit drenched therein." So was it with Horatius Bonar. He believed, and therefore spoke. His enunciation was slow and solemn, and sometimes the emphasis he laid on the sinfulness of sin and the peril of the impenitent was awful and overpowering. Not less was his presentation of grace and pardon to the sinner

tender and winning. His ministry was one of intense reality ; none could fail to see that he was in earnest. It was the passion of his life to win souls, and largely did God grant his desires.

A refreshing interruption of his home labours was supplied by the recurrence of the Communion seasons of some of his closest friends, in which he stately took part. The congregations of his two brothers, John and Andrew, counted on his annual visit as they counted on the return of seed-time or of harvest. These were seasons of great profit and delight. People from all the country round would flock to the quiet Perthshire parish of Collace, where his brother Andrew ministered. There was at that time a strong thirst for the gospel and a spirit of earnest inquiry. These occasions were "feasts of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." From such animating employ and fruitful fellowship, the brothers returned with fresh energy to their work at home. Among the mourners in the old Canongate churchyard last Monday was one thankful soul from Perthshire, irresistibly drawn thither by the dear memories of the past, who had often had her vessel filled at such Communion seasons, when the full-hearted brothers so spake that many believed. Whether in the villages around Kelso, or in his more distant Communion visits, like Philip in the city of Samaria, Horatius Bonar preached Christ unto them. At the Kelso Communions his services were lovingly reciprocated by his brothers and friends. On these occasions there was a short meeting for prayer, at which many lingered, after the evening service, "when," says an attached old member, "our own Dr. Bonar and the other two Drs. Bonar, sometimes all three

together in the pulpit, asked for a special parting blessing, concluding with the verse,—

‘O may we stand before the Lamb,  
When earth and seas are fled,  
And hear the Judge pronounce our name,  
With blessings on our head!’

I used to wish that we did not need to go down into the world again, but that we might go straight up into heaven, which seemed so near.” Very sacred are such memories in the hearts of many who “remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.”

His ministry to the young was all through life a blessed and beautiful part of his work. His strong nature seemed to draw close to it, as if for shelter, weaker and dependent natures. They felt him powerful; to them at least he was not stern, as he could sometimes be to men whose views or conduct he disapproved. His sermons to the young were peculiarly attractive. Their presence threw a special liveliness into his manner, and stimulated to more rapid utterance than was his wont. Both in Kelso and in Edinburgh, as long as strength was given him, crowded audiences of the young flocked to hear him. While they were assembling in the church, he would move kindly up and down among them, to welcome them and see that they were comfortably seated. In reading Scripture he would pause and ask for the next word, and the sermon would be brightened by lively questions and answers. As a sequel to the friendship thus established between the strong-willed preacher and his youthful hearers, the children he met would often run up to him in the street, claiming a kind of property in him. And sometimes he would be aroused from a reverie,

as he walked along, by a soft little hand gently placed in his own, and trusting eyes upturned to his.

His addresses in the Sunday-school and his teaching in his Bible-classes won many a young heart, not only to himself but to his Master. Let an old member of a Kelso Bible-class tell the tale of sorrowing memory in her own warm, simple words:—"I sometimes wonder if any one else ever possessed the faculty that he had of drawing towards him the affection of young people, which, when you were once brought under the charm of his friendship, could never afterwards be lost or lessened. How well I remember his class for us girls! We would not for all the world have missed that hour on Wednesday afternoon. I think I see the little room, underneath the dear old church, where we gathered, a bright, happy band of school-girls, sitting around to listen to his earnest, loving, faithful teaching. I see Dr. Bonar seated at the end of the long table with the large Bible spread out before him, the Bible-hymn-book in his hand, his dear handsome face beaming, and the pleasant smile which lighted it up, as some of us gave a fuller, clearer answer than he expected to the question asked. And then the last meeting before the holidays; what a solemn hour it was, as he reminded us that never again here below should we all meet together, and spoke of the meeting-place above. All kneeling down, to be each tenderly commended to the loving care of our heavenly Father, bathed in tears, we could hardly tear ourselves away, lingering long after the usual time. How we still cherish the hymn he wrote specially *for us*, beginning,—

'Shall this life of mine be wasted?

Shall this vineyard lie untilled?

Shall true joy pass by untasted,

And this soul remain unfilled?'

And ending thus,—

‘Then, no longer idly dreaming,  
Shall I fling my years away ;  
But, each precious hour redeeming,  
Wait for the eternal day !’

Our names on copies of the hymn, along with his own beautiful signature, were written with the gold pen we had presented to him. How often has that hymn stimulated me to gather up the fragments of time, instead of passing a lazy, idle hour. I have no sweeter memories than that Bible-class and the Communion services in our dear old church.”

It need not be said how tenderly gentle and loving such a father was toward his own children: he found it difficult to think they did wrong. This love to them was repaid by reverential and admiring love to him. One of them writes: “Among my earliest remembrances as a child is that of awe-struck listening to the voice of prayer coming from the locked study, where he knelt, or paced up and down, sometimes for hours. A young servant in our house owed her conversion to this. She thought: ‘If *he* needs to pray so much, what will become of me if I do not pray?’” Successive bereavements in his family brought out the depth of his affection, and prepared him all the better to succour and to sympathize with the afflicted.

In his early Kelso years, Dr. Bonar was in the habit of issuing invitations for united prayer on specified subjects, and extending over perhaps eight days, thus foreshadowing the action of the Evangelical Alliance and other bodies, in the same direction.

The copious stream that flowed from his pen in both prose and verse had its origin in the felt needs



of his people. He wished to give them, simply and clearly, guidance on the way to heaven. When thus he penned such tracts as "Believe and Live," he little thought some of them would go round the world, and become classics in evangelistic literature. The luminous presentation of gospel truth in "Believe and Live," made it the means of removing doubt and difficulty from many perplexed souls, and of leading many to the Saviour. Its simple doctrine was by some sharply challenged. But it commended itself to the Church, and it received the stamp of unqualified approval from his own honoured professor, Dr. Chalmers, who used to say, "Yes ; I hold by that." The "Kelso Tracts" did, and still do, a wide and blessed work. Thus Dr. Bonar was led on to the production of larger works, such as "God's Way of Peace," "The Night of Weeping," and a multitude of others from his unwearying pen. Through these his teaching has spread to all lands where English is spoken, and, by means of translations, to lands where English is not known. Who can estimate how many perplexities have, by the blessed teaching of these books, been swept away from souls which groped in spiritual darkness, or how many tears have been wiped from weeping eyes, the wide world over?

The vastness of the influence for good thus wielded may be gathered from the fact that the circulation of "God's Way of Peace" amounts to 285,000 copies ; of "The Night of Weeping" to 59,000 ; and of "Hymns of Faith and Hope" (though in this we anticipate what remains to be spoken of), to 140,729.

Still more interesting is it to trace to their earthly source—for their true fountain-head was not of this world—the streams of sacred song which filled deep

channels and fertilized distant lands. Mr. Bonar, when superintendent of his Sabbath school in Leith, began with the simple aim of putting into the lips and depositing in the hearts of the children Gospel truth in a clear and attractive form. Beginning in Leith, the hymns were multiplied in Kelso. The first seems to have been "I was a wandering sheep," the second, "I lay my sins on Jesus," the third, "A few more years shall roll." Leith and Kelso children loved them. The children of Scotland and of England heard and loved them. Our sons in the colonies and our brothers in America heard and loved them. And now children and old people too, on the Continent of Europe, from Spain to Russia, find in them, as rendered into their own tongues, fitting utterance for their spiritual longings. Hymn succeeded hymn, and some of them are scattered over the globe in millions. Like the richest of our Scottish songsters, which

"Trills her thick warbled note, the summer long,"

the singer ceased not to pour his lays. In joy they welled up, not without a shade of pathos in them, from the fountain of a thankful heart. In sorrow, as they flowed tenderly and touchingly, they assuaged the keenness of his woe.

As he tells us, in that exquisite fragment of poetic autobiography, his preface to "My Old Letters,"—

"Thou art the lute with which I sang my sadness,  
When sadness like a cloud begirt my way ;  
Thou art the harp whose strings gave out my gladness,  
When burst the sunshine of a happier day,  
Resting upon my soul with sweet and silent ray.

The sickle thou with which I have been reaping  
My great life-harvest here on earth ; and now  
'Mid these my sheaves I lay me down unweeping,

Nay, full of joy, in life's still evening-glow,  
And wipe the reaper's sweat from this toil-furrowed brow."

A somewhat silent man in private life, and markedly reticent as to his own feelings and experiences, he had less to gain than many from human sympathy, in his unspoken heartaches ; so God gave him the solace of his ever-present lyre, which yielded sympathetic response to his lightest touch. He recognized, as years ran on, that his "life-harvest" was being widely reaped by means of the same tuneful lyre.

I may be pardoned if, as a son of the manse that nestles by the banks of the Tweed, I venture to add this thought—Dr. Bonar's early settlement and twenty-eight years' ministry in the old Border town that lies so sweetly near the spot where Tweed and Teviot meet, with richly wooded banks, and pasture-fields aglow with the gowan and the buttercup, while the hoary Abbey, in the cloistered sleeping-place of the dead, towers tall and solemn over all, and tells the story of eight hundred years to one of the fairest scenes in all fair Scotland—surely this has not been without its influence in tuning the lyre he loved so well. In the same spot, to which in after years he led her back, was born and nurtured the gentle partner of his life, whose sensitive nature was keenly alive to the beauty of her father's and her husband's home, and who, at the same fountain, herself also drank some draughts of poesy and song. Well, it is over now ; and the two lives are reunited where no shadow rests upon the green pastures, and where the two harps will never more be attuned to strains of grief.

"I'm but a stranger here "

fitted the land they have left ; it does not fit the shore



they have reached. In heaven there are no strangers. And now both can join in the jubilant acclaim of the poet's partner,—

“ Farewell, mortality,  
     Jesus is mine ;  
 Welcome, eternity,  
     Jesus is mine ;  
 Welcome, ye scenes of rest,  
 Welcome, ye mansions blest,  
 Welcome, a Saviour's breast,  
     Jesus is mine.”

But to return: one cardinal feature of Dr. Bonar's hymns is that they are not merely sacred poems but hymns indeed. That is, they contain such expression of adoration, confession, aspiration as is fitting in the devout worshipper. And while they express they lend intensity to his thoughts. It needs no effort to interpret them ; a child may understand them ; they flow limpid as the mountain stream ; yet they sparkle with the graces of imagination and with felicities of expression.

The Church of God has not been slow to discover that they minister to her devotion and meet her spiritual need. Some of them are found scattered in the hymnals of all lands. Fifty years of sacred song give large opportunity for selection ; and there are doubtless yet others of the hymns that will receive the stamp of general acceptance. They were written in very varied circumstances, sometimes timed by the numbers of the tinkling brook that babbled near him ; sometimes attuned to the ordered tramp of the ocean, whose crested waves broke on the beach by which he wandered ; sometimes set to the rude music of the railway train that hurried him to the scene of duty ;

sometimes measured by the silent rhythm of the midnight stars that shone above him.

There are few honours on earth equal to that of giving harmonious, elevating, enkindling utterance to the deepest devotional thoughts of the children of God. A sermon does its work and passes. But a true hymn is sung, and sung, and sung again by souls humbled, animated, inspired by its breath, in countless assemblies of the faithful, in various lands, through many generations. *That* honour have not all the saints. That honour God has given to your lamented pastor.

The stir of strife did not suit Horatius Bonar. The din of controversy was distasteful to him, his weapons were not fashioned for such employ, and so

“ In days of public strife, when, sharp and stinging,  
The angry words went daily to and fro,  
Friend against friend the polished missiles flinging,  
Each seeking who could launch the keenest blow,  
I went to thee, my harp, and bade thy numbers flow.”

When many a keen controversy of the nineteenth century shall be forgotten, “I lay my sins on Jesus,” and kindred strains, shall utter and shall swell the devotion of God’s united children. We are not all fitted for all work ; and that he felt himself. But which of us is fitted for *his* work ?

It would be interesting to know the poet’s preference and his judgment about his own hymns. One little guide to this we are enabled to contribute. When a friend one day said to him, “My favourite among all your hymns is, ‘When the weary seeking rest,’” he replied, “I think that is my own favourite too ; it has less poetry in it than some of them, but I like it.” And well he might. Its swell and sweep of tearful compassion for sorrow under every form, and its

successive bursts of passionate pleading on behalf of the sorrowing, may well give it a foremost place in the worship of the suffering sons of men. Perhaps the next in the poet's own esteem was, "I heard the voice of Jesus say." And on this point the judgment of the Church will hardly differ from the judgment of the author. Bishop Fraser, of Manchester, thought this hymn the finest in the English language.

The breath of Dr. Bonar's poetry has wafted the message of salvation to many who do not hear it in sermons, or who might not welcome it in tracts or in ordinary books. The history would be voluminous and of tender interest, if it could be written, of the dark souls enlightened, the troubled souls comforted, the dying souls revived, by repeated or remembered verses of Horatius Bonar's hymns. One present at the funeral told Andrew Bonar that the hymn beginning "I hear the words of love" had led him into clear light. How many others could bear such testimony! We mourn to-day that the voice of the sweet psalmist, not of Scotland or of England, but of the Church of God, "the sweet psalmist of *Israel*," will be heard no more.

I have spoken chiefly of his Kelso ministry and work. Time forbids me to dwell upon his work in Edinburgh. Nor, brethren, is it needful that I should enlarge on what is so well known to yourselves. His work here was a continuation, with necessary modifications, of his work in Kelso. It received the recognition of his brethren when he was placed in the chair of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.

Vigorous alike in body and mind, he was gifted with a singular tolerance of toil. Editor of and

contributor to various periodicals, his pen was never idle. Books, tracts, hymns continually occupied him. He was consulted from all quarters about questions of experimental religion and prophetic interpretation, and his correspondence was immense. Yet he was always ready to accept of preaching engagements far and near, when free from imperative home claims. For all this and much more, time and strength had to be found amid the steady demands of his pulpit and pastoral duties in his own congregation. One who greatly honoured Dr. Bonar said to me that one friend told him he was always writing, and another that he was always preaching, and a third that he was always praying. Nor was any one of the three far wrong. A fourth might with equal truth have added that he was always visiting. At Moody's great gatherings, at Mildmay Conferences, and the like, no presence was more grateful, no words more helpful than his. At prophetic conferences he took a leading part, holding firmly premillennial views during all his career. No labour was declined where good might be done. His only complaint was when strength for labour failed. The last time I saw him, some months ago, on his bed of languor and weariness, his plaintive utterance was this, "Useless, useless, useless!" as if he could be useless, whose winged words of truth were scattered over half the globe.

Of his last illness I will not say much. In its earlier stages, before prostration and uneasiness became extreme, his sufferings seemed to quicken all his sympathies. He was compelled to lie stretched out at full length in search of ease. In that recumbent posture the sick man used night and morning to conduct family worship. His children listened to the

outpourings of his heart. Thoughts and feelings which he never breathed otherwise in human hearing he poured into the ear of his God, till he seemed to forget the presence of earthly listeners. Family matters were referred to in detail, with the mention of the names of his children and others. His petitions were particular and minute. For his loved congregation he always poured out his supplication, mentioning tenderly by name persons in affliction. His prayers reflected his own frames, sometimes coming out of the depths, and sometimes rising into songs of deliverance. Taught by his own sufferings, he would say, "Oh how many people are in pain! I never knew how to pray for them enough before." At that time his Parallel New Testament lay by him all day long and satisfied him.

Darker days came, and physical uneasiness and pain engrossed him more. The effort of continuous thought became too much for him, and his spiritual nourishment was supplied in broken snatches of truth or in single texts. Listening fatigued him, and it was easier for him to repeat brief portions of Scripture, which from life-long familiarity still clung to his memory: "Have mercy on me, for I am weak; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed; my soul is also sore vexed: but Thou, O Lord, how long?" Sometimes he would cry out, "Lord, help me to bear this." If refreshed by quiet sleep, he would say, "Oh, what a mercy to be free from pain! let us say the 103rd Psalm." Even at this time he would repeat it correctly from beginning to end. Through life it had been his habit to read this psalm on the occurrence of any joyful event; and when the end drew near, this psalm was still his song. An illuminated text in large characters



hung on the wall at the foot of his bed, and was continually on the lips and in the heart of the dying man ; it was this, " Until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

In his later weeks he scarcely spoke but from necessity. And so the way-worn pilgrim fell on sleep, to awake where there is no more pain, for the former things are passed away ; to awake, after the long gloom, in the sudden brightness of the glory for which he yearned, and of which he sang,—

" What a city ! what a glory !  
Far beyond the brightest story  
Of the ages old and hoary :  
Ah, 'tis heaven at last !

Christ Himself the living splendour,  
Christ the sunlight mild and tender ;  
Praises to the Lamb we render :  
Ah, 'tis heaven at last !

Now at length the veil is rended,  
Now the pilgrimage is ended,  
And the saints their thrones ascended :  
Ah, 'tis heaven at last !

Broken death's dread bands that bound us,  
Life and victory around us ;  
Christ, the King, Himself hath crowned us :  
Ah, 'tis heaven at last ! "

*Denique calum*, thus beautifully expanded by the soaring and sanctified imagination of the poet, was the motto of his family—a family identified with the ecclesiastical and spiritual history of Scotland, and enshrined in its grateful memory. Let us think of him, now that he is gone, not in connection with the parting shadows, but with the greetings of the open gate above;—*Denique calum*.

It is noteworthy that one of the last products of his pen, written near the end of 1887, is entitled: "My Funeral: shall it be this year?" It is but a fragment, a page of manuscript. The once nimble pen refused to fulfil its task: the New Year's tract was never completed; the funeral was over before the question was answered.

To another late and unfinished paper, that written for his jubilee, I have already adverted. It has to me a strange and pathetic interest in its closing sentences:—"Righteousness," says Dr. Bonar, "without works to the sinner, simply on his acceptance of the Divine message concerning Jesus and His sufficiency,—this has been the burden of our good news. . . . It is one message, one gospel, one cross, one sacrifice, from which nothing can be taken and to which nothing can be added. This is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending of our ministry."

He then casts his glance upon the burning questions of the day and says: "The changes that have taken place in public opinion, in theological speculation, in ecclesiastical discipline, in religious sentiment, in spiritual thought, in conjectural criticism, in the value attached to belief and non-belief, in the new codes of hermeneutical law, in the rejection of creeds, and the refusal of any guidance or control save those of science and philosophy, the adoption of culture,"——a comma is added, and at that comma the paper ends. The sick man never resumed the broken sentence, and the opinion he had formed was never uttered. What thoughts that uncompleted sentence awakens in the mind! One wonders how, under the clear light of the heavens that shine around him now, and amid the stillness of that clime which is disturbed by no

breath of controversy, that sentence would be finished.

Finally, brethren, need I remind you what was the heart's desire of your late pastor on your behalf ; and what were his daily dying prayers for you, when his voice could no longer reach you, yet could ascend to the throne of God ? Some of you perhaps have never realized how tenderly he loved you. On one occasion, when some sharp reference was made to one of his flock, his heart was grieved within him. "Hush !" he said, "do not speak so. You do not know how a minister feels to the members of his congregation over whom he has watched and prayed. It is like speaking against my own children." Such was the man whose message to you was, "Be ye reconciled to God." By some of you it is to be feared that the invitation of him who, like Philip, preached Christ unto you, has not yet been accepted. Will you refuse it this day, when it comes to you hallowed by the memory of a faithful ministry now ended, and a pleading voice now silent : "Be ye reconciled to God" ?



# Sermon

*PREACHED IN THE CHALMERS MEMORIAL CHURCH,  
GRANGE, EDINBURGH, ON THE  
AFTERNOON OF SABBATH, 11th AUGUST 1889,  
BY THE  
REV. A. N. SOMERVILLE, D.D., GLASGOW.*



## Sermon.

BY THE REV. A. N. SOMERVILLE, D.D., GLASGOW.

*“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.”—REV. xv. 3.*

THE theme suggested by this vision is the Christian's contemplation of the dispensations of God. The Divine picture is exhibited to us near the close of the Revelation, and is introductory to the pouring out of the seven vials containing the seven last plagues, “for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” The subject, therefore, is most solemn and alarming. Let me say, that I do not here enter on the interpretation of these plagues or judgments, nor attempt to fix the period of their occurrence. I wish merely to notice that the scene presented to us is the prelude to their execution. What is the method by which God has chosen to introduce these terrible things to the notice of the Church? It is not by a blare of trumpets, nor by the wail of those enduring unutterable anguish, nor by thunders that make us vibrate, nor with terror, but by music and by a Divine song. This music proceeds from a mighty host, who, after a conflict in which they have been willing to yield up their lives for the testimony of Jesus, are represented as now standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire; not any more clad in the armour of God, but holding in their hands the harps of God.

In these circumstances, the voice of heavenly harmonies is heard pealing from on high; and as in Beth-

lehem, at the birth of Messiah, the shepherds heard the angelic host singing in the sky, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men ;" so now, though it is no longer a choir of angels who appear in the celestial vision, but a host of redeemed and faithful men, the sounds which fall upon our ear are those of rejoicing and praise.

They sing a hymn of triumph, whose title is "The Song of Moses the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb." Not only, however, is the *title* of the hymn given to us, but, as in the case of the shepherds, the very words of it, which are to this effect,—

"Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art 'holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee ; for Thy judgments are made manifest."

Let us notice the two parts included in the title of this song.

## I.—THE SONG OF MOSES THE SERVANT OF GOD.

It must be remembered that the Revelation is a mystical or symbolical book. The Song of Moses with which we are familiar is that which was sung by the leader of Israel at the Red Sea, when Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage and their adversaries were overwhelmed. But we are not to restrict the meaning of "the Song of Moses" to the literal song, but to view it in relation to Moses as the representative of the Law which bears his name, and, indeed, to the Old Testament generally. It embraces in its meaning all the deliverances which God wrought for His people, as well as the judgments executed on His enemies,

such as the destruction of the Canaanites, and the dreadful things found in some parts of the Psalms and prophets, and which are so hard to be understood by many.

That these heavenly choristers, standing on the sea of glass, should sing this song, is a joyous acknowledgment on the part of the Church of God that all that may have seemed dark, mysterious, and at times inexplicable under the Law and under the Old Testament, is perfectly reconcilable with the gracious character of God.

This we take to be the import of the first part of the title of the choristers' triumphant song.

## II.—THE SONG OF THE LAMB.

As for the second part of the title, "The Song of the Lamb," it is somewhat more difficult to explain.

We naturally turn to Chapter v. of this book, and are ready to exclaim that "the Song of the Lamb" in Chapter xv. must be the same as that recorded in Chapter v. This, however, is questionable. In Chapter v. a mystical account is given of the manner in which the redeemed in Heaven greeted the appearance of the Lamb, when He stood up as Redeemer in the midst of the throne, to claim it as His indefeasible right to take the book, and to open the seals thereof—that book, which, under a figure taken from the ancient Jewish law, represented the title-deeds of the inheritance, and in which are enrolled the names of those repeatedly said to be written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

It is quite natural for us, at first sight, to suppose that "the Song of the Lamb" in Chapter v., "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain: Thou hast redeemed us to

God by Thy blood," is the same as the song referred to in Chapter xv.; yet we are constrained to believe that "the Song of the Lamb" combined with "the Song of Moses the servant of God," in our text, is a somewhat different song from that in Chapter v. There the Lamb is the subject of the song, whereas in the passage before us the Lamb Himself is He who sings. That the songs in the two chapters are not the same, we gather from the fact that whereas in Chapter v. Christ is extolled because of redemption through His death, in Chapter xv. the Father is glorified because of all His mighty acts and judgments, thus—

"Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty;  
Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.  
Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?  
For Thou only art holy:  
For all nations shall come and worship before Thee;  
For Thy judgments are made manifest."

And whereas it might be thought that the idea of the Lamb singing is incongruous, I would recall such passages as these—Christ's own words, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee;" and again that wondrous passage in the Messianic psalm, "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord;" and yet again that glorious prophecy, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."

What, then, may we understand to be "the Song of the Lamb"? It is the acknowledgment by the Son of all the great, marvellous, mighty, and holy acts by which the Father carries forward His Divine purposes,



all of which are summed up in the New Testament. It is the acknowledgment by the Son of all the Father's marvellous love to a lost world. It is the declaration of the covenant by which the Father gave a people to Him for their redemption, promising to Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. It is the acknowledgment that all the Father's resources of wisdom, love, and power are exercised in the protection and defence of His own, and that all events shall work together for their good and for the glory of God's name.

But, it may be asked, if "the Song of the Lamb" is the celebration of the Divine glory, wherein does it differ from "the Song of Moses the servant of God"? The difference lies in this, that whereas, in the case of Moses, the administration of all events in providence is regulated by God's infinite wisdom, manifested in His government of human affairs, in regard to "the Song of the Lamb," we are reminded that all things are connected with infinite love, that love which the Father bears to the Son, and which He has manifested towards sinners, in giving the Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, for their salvation. This infinite love, betokened by "the Song of the Lamb," finds expression in all the acts of God's providence, however terrible and hard at the time they be to reconcile with God's paternal tenderness.

"The Song of the Lamb" is, like "the Song of Moses," an ascription of praise to the Father; but that ascription is infinitely transcending in the case of the Lamb, although the supreme subject of praise to the Father involves the sufferings, the death, and the atonement of the beloved Son Himself.

The lesson from the song for us in this world is the

encouragement to maintain our souls in patience under the most disastrous circumstances and occasions of poignant grief. The terrible vials of Divine judgment are here introduced to us by Divine song : let us carry in faith the idea of this Divine minstrelsy as the welcome to be given by ourselves even to the most alarming and trying events, whether in our persons, our families, our Church, or in the world. In all circumstances let us participate with those who stand upon the sea of glass, singing "the Song of Moses the servant of God," and "the Song of the Lamb."

The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, as our first petition, "Hallowed be Thy name ; Thy kingdom come." This prayer has been offered for nearly nineteen hundred years, and is now being offered by a greater multitude of worshippers than ever before. May we not be assured that that prayer cannot fail in any case of being answered, however the event is to be brought about?

It will most certainly be found that not only shall that kingdom, by its invincible power, crush and disintegrate all the oppositions which the world and the forces of hell can devise and set up against it, and, as is emphatically implied in Christ's word, pulverize everything that superstition, scepticism, and atheistic ungodliness can rear against it, but that this kingdom shall utilize for its own purposes the mightiest forces of evil and turn them all to the honour of the Lord and the good of men. Meanwhile let us patiently wait till the Lord come, until all His purposes shall be accomplished. Of one thing we may be assured that nothing shall avail to set aside the great truth of the preciousness of that redemption wrought out by the Lord Jesus.



I have endeavoured to show that "the Song of the Lamb," described in Chapter xv., is different in its character from the song associated with the name of the Lamb in Chapter v. ; yet I cannot refrain from referring to that song of praise to the Lamb, recorded in the Song of the Redeemed in heaven, detailed in Chapter v. of this book, wherein these representatives of the redeemed fall down before the Lamb, saying, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

The value of that precious portion of Scripture lies in the connection that it shows between the salvation of men belonging to all nations, and redemption—redemption specifically by the blood of the Lamb. All who are saved, or ever shall be, have once been sinners, and have belonged to a lost world. Their salvation is bound up with the person and the work of One, He being at once the Son of God and the Son of man, and all whom He saves being redeemed by His atoning blood. Let that memorable utterance of the apostle be ever borne on our heart, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," that "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Let us see that we bear ever in mind our condition as sinners, and that, renouncing self and all confidences in man, we trust in the atoning blood of this mighty Saviour alone, that we live with this as our grand purpose,—to bear witness, by our life and word, for Christ's

name, and the salvation of men. God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world.

As ages roll on, the redemption which Christ has purchased with His blood will only become more valuable to us ; and it is a delightful thought that never will that redemption be found to be so precious as on that day when we stand in resurrection glory at the great King's right hand. The Lord Jesus, who died to save us, will come again. He will gather before Him all His own. Not till that day, when the myriads of the saved shall stand revealed to each other,—when the misery from which they have been delivered shall have been shown them in the perdition of the lost,—when the countlessness of the sins, pardoned in each case, shall have been laid to heart,—when the beauty which the Lord has put on them all has been made manifest,—when the eternal weight of glory in reserve for them shall stand out to view,—when the holiness of the society, with which alone for the future they are to be associated, shall be realized,—when they shall be conscious that sin shall trouble them no more, that sorrow and sighing have bid their last farewell, and that God Himself is their inheritance for ever ;—not till that day, when they take it fully in that all this, and every blessing they receive, or ever shall receive, they owe to the death of their King, shall those who are saved apprehend, as they will then do, the power of His cross.

When the great work of judgment is over, the King shall rise, and looking round on that mighty throng, stretching beyond the range of mortal ken, shall give the signal and say, "Let us go, the work is done. There

remains no more for us to perform." And when the King shall say to those on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," is it too bold a stretch of imagination to suppose that the innumerable multitude, exchanging glances with each other, shall gather after Him, and surge and sway, like the waves of the sea, as He passes onwards? Shall they not, under uncontrollable impulse, take up that song, sung in heaven so long ago, "Thou . . . hast redeemed us by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," and so "go away into life eternal," as their King Himself promised on earth so long before?

Oh, may we all be among that glorious throng, you and your late beloved and venerable pastor, all of us, saved by unmerited grace alone; but, be it riveted on our heart, that unless we learn to sing that song now, we shall never have our lips opened to sing it then. Amen.

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On Monday last I followed to the grave the remains of the venerable senior pastor of this congregation.

The life and ministry of Horatius Bonar were not restricted to Edinburgh, yet they served to ennoble his native city.

While he added his name to the roll of the more illustrious ministers of the gospel who have adorned the annals of Edinburgh since the days of the Reformation, he has imparted to this capital, already so renowned, a lustre which is recognized in every region of the world, and which will perpetuate his memory long after all who are with us to-day have gone from the earth.

Our late beloved friend has passed away from before our eyes ; but while he sleeps with his fathers may we not say he lives with us still, and has a dwelling in the grateful hearts of multitudes throughout the world. Yet his true home is in that region of blessedness above, where, without doubt, he has received the welcome accorded to Christ's faithful servants, as they enter their Father's house.

I shrink from passing an encomium on that dear friend, the first pastor whom this congregation possessed, and whose ministry it has so long enjoyed. You know his inestimable value even better than most of those who have been privileged to own him as their friend.

It would be of little service to narrate the steps of his life history. We with pleasure recall its prominent features which are familiar to you all.

It is a possession, the value of which many are apt to overlook, for one to have had a reputable and godly parentage. This was our friend's case.

That he lived for the long space of over eighty years, maintaining a Christian and unblemished life in this world of sin, treachery, and unrighteousness, is a valuable tribute to his name.

Let any one consider the influence of a consistent spiritual walk among men for such a period. When to this is added, that, from the day of his conversion at an early season of life, he laid all the resources of his being at the feet of Jesus, consecrating his scholarship, his distinguished abilities, and all the energies of his nature, that he might undividedly serve on earth his heavenly Master, it cannot but be admitted that our world, not to say our city, is the poorer for the loss sustained. The compensation left to us is the

memory which he has bequeathed to those who to-day are mourning over their bereavement—that memory being fraught with so much that is worthy of our imitation, so much that is useful, and graceful, and loving, and kind, with nothing to embitter recollection.

How long I have known Dr. Horatius Bonar, and my companion, his younger brother, I need not say. Dr. Bonar was a few years my senior, and this tended to make intimacy less close in student years; but his fidelity to duty in all relations of life was a stimulus to those who knew him, and had a lofty bearing on the life-work of the many who shared his friendship, and who took part with him in those associations and studies in which he held so eminent a place. Almost all of these early friends have gone before him, but each one has left an impress which will not speedily be effaced.

A special reason why the memory of our friend should be cherished is the circumstance, that along with others, some of whom are still spared to us, he took an active share in promoting the revival of vital religion in Scotland at the memorable period preceding and accompanying the Disruption. In those days of youthful activity and burning enthusiasm, he helped to raise the standard, and call men to rally around the cross, everywhere commending Jesus and a freely offered gospel to the people. I have in memory one interesting occasion, when, in 1842, along with Robert M'Cheyne and Dr. Purves, of Jedburgh, I took part with Dr. Bonar in an evangelistic mission to the city of Newcastle. This fidelity to the gospel, which has been attended with much fruit, especially in the south of Scotland, he continued, with unabated earnestness, to maintain to the last. His dear brother



Andrew assured me last week that for forty years, without interruption, he had, alike in Collace and in Glasgow, preached for him at communions for two or three days in succession, sometimes with great power, and to the deep satisfaction of his hearers.

One striking characteristic of your late pastor was the ceaseless activity of his pen. While faithfully performing the duties of his direct ministry, alike in the pulpit and in pastoral visitation, his pen seemed ever to cling to his hand, and with a readiness that never wearied, he was able to address himself to the larger audience who lay beyond his own ministerial charge, but who greedily imbibed what streamed from his study. I used to wonder how he managed to keep up such an inexhaustible flow. Many of us remember the famous "Kelso Tracts," that made not a little sensation at the time. His editorship of the "Presbyterian Review" and of the "Journal of Prophecy" cost him not a little labour. Then his management of the "Christian Treasury," so well conducted by his amiable predecessor, the late Dr. Cameron, of Melbourne, gave him a prominent position; while such books as the Life of beloved John Milne, of Perth, the interesting memorial volume, "A Stranger Here," and such books as "The Night of Weeping," "God's Way of Peace," so greatly blessed, "God's Way of Holiness," "The Everlasting Righteousness," and many others, have had a wide circulation, some of them being translated into other languages. Besides these, we had the interesting account of his journey through the Great Wilderness and Palestine, his "White Fields of France," the Memoir of his son-in-law, Rev. Theophilus Dodds, so affectingly cut off in the height of his usefulness in Paris, and the characteristic poetical

volume designated "My Old Letters," containing so many passages singularly rich and beautiful. These and many other products of his continuous labour all made him favourably known.

Dr. Bonar expended much energy in prophetical studies, as witness his volume "Prophetical Landmarks," and his name is identified with a special line of interpretation which has many followers. But manifold as were his efforts in these directions, perhaps that by which the name of Horatius Bonar will be most pleasantly, gratefully, and fruitfully remembered, is the hymns with which he has enriched our literature, charmed the world, and solaced the weary, the desponding, the sick, and the dying—hymns which, by their simplicity, truthfulness, and evangelical fervour, have not only comforted and instructed many, but have led sinners not a few to the Saviour.

I have not alluded to the trials which, in the course of his ministerial life, Dr. Bonar was called to experience. Not merely was he the subject of severe personal illness, which compelled him to suspend his ministry for a time, and make a pilgrimage to the East, a record of which he has left in the volumes already referred to; but the Lord saw fit to withdraw from him his loving partner, and call away many dear children. All these trials served to bow him down, and, doubtless, had much to do with drawing forth expression in his beautiful and plaintive hymns.

I may here quote a single sentence from a letter I had from him myself, dated October 10th, 1882, soon after the stunning calamity which suddenly deprived his sorrowing daughter of her husband, who had acted for some years as the effective and trusted coadjutor of Dr. R. W. M'All, of Paris.



"God took five children from me some years ago, and He has given me other five to bring up for Him in my old age."

They all continued with him as inmates of his home, and were tenderly cared for while he lived.

Regarding this care, the widowed mother remarks, "My dear father's love for these children was wonderful, and how often his prayers must have gone up for them! Surely these prayers, along with their own father's, *must* prevail."

I must not omit reference to the circumstance that our Free Church put her highest honour for the year on Dr. Bonar by placing him in the Moderator's chair, where he acquitted himself with his well-known ability, and distinguished himself for the fearlessness with which he asserted Divine truth, and enjoined on his brethren the duty of maintaining unity and brotherly love.

Reverting to the text for to-day, I conclude with observing that Dr. Bonar embodied in his testimony his faithful adherence to evangelical truth, as represented by Moses in the Old Testament, and by the Lamb in the New; and that it is an interesting coincidence that the last utterances which we received from our friend's lips are songs, which echo in our hearts like the minstrelsy that came from the voices and harps of the choristers that stood on the sea of glass celebrating the grace and majesty of God.

It is a comfort to know that Dr. Bonar has left his congregation in the charge of one who ministered so affectionately to him as his colleague, who is so mature in pastoral service, who possesses the confidence of his brethren, and who has already proved so useful to the Church at large.

# Sermon

*PREACHED IN THE CHALMERS MEMORIAL CHURCH,  
GRANGE, EDINBURGH, ON THE  
FORENOON OF SABBATH, 15th SEPTEMBER 1887,  
BY THE  
REV. J. M. SLOAN, M.A., EDINBURGH.*



## Sermon.

By THE REV. J. M. SLOAN, M.A., EDINBURGH.

*"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-poor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."—Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6.*

### MOSES THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

THERE are few contrasts more impressive than that which presents itself when we bring together before the mind the birth and the death of some noble man of God. In the former case, the life is but a feeble spark of uncertain promise,—a tiny star in the darkness which may go quickly out: in the latter case, you watch the setting sun, with many miles of cloud aflame around it, its day's journey completed, its beneficent service accomplished, and the glory that gathers round its latter end witnessing that it has not run its course in vain.

The very name of Moses carries our thought from the one extreme to the other. On the one hand, it suggests days of tyranny and sorrow; a distracted mother; a river's side; an ark of bulrushes; a weeping babe; a compassionate princess, who called the child's name Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water." That is the one extreme.

But, on the other, what does the name Moses say to us, after his life's career is ended? What does it suggest to us in the closing decades of the nineteenth Christian century?

For millenniums that name has spoken to the world of a character, of an influence that has told on religion and civilization like few others among the sons of men. Christ Jesus apart, Moses of the Old Testament economy, and Paul of the New, have graven themselves most deeply on human thought, conduct, and character, and on all those institutions which most elevate and dignify mankind. The name, therefore, carries us on from the helplessness of infancy to the very pinnacle of human influence and renown.

Naturally highly gifted, providentially liberally educated, and singularly disciplined, Moses became leader, deliverer, lawgiver, prophet, historian, and sacred singer of the foremost race of his age,—perhaps, we might say, of the most gifted race of any age. Not without heats of temperament and an imperiousness of nature, which his life at court may have fostered, and which seriously influenced his latter end, his faith, his meekness, his zeal, his wisdom, his largeness of heart, his self-sacrifice, his management of men—all mark him out as a man in the very foremost file of the worthies of the world. He had, under God, largely to do with the fashioning of the character, and the imbuing with ideas of the mind of a people that has been a mighty factor in the world's history ; with the management of them in the midst of events, and under conditions, that have had a formative influence on them and on the world, from his own day to ours.

This man of so high and lasting renown is here spoken of in the sacred Word, at his life's close, as the servant of the Lord. We are struck with the simplicity as well as with the dignity of the title. It has its glory not from the designation "servant," but from Him whose servant he was—the Lord. Courtiers and kings

have their titles,—MOST NOBLE, MOST GRACIOUS, MOST EXCELLENT, ROYAL IMPERIAL, and so on ; but to be emperor of half Europe is to have less enduring honour than to be, in sincerity and truth, the Lord's servant. The worthies of the race who shall have everlasting honour have all been the Lord's servants. Moses and David, Isaiah and Daniel, Peter and Paul, have had no higher title than this ; nor has the world any loftier title to bestow, nor can it bestow of right this title on any. It is divinely conferred when rightly conferred. And Moses had this signal honour: "Moses my servant is dead," the Lord said unto Joshua. "Well done, good and faithful servant," is the welcome the saints will get in the great day of God.

#### PISGAH'S SUMMIT: A VIEWPOINT.

The circumstances which led up to the scene presented to us in this chapter, we do not rehearse. Moses here takes his last look of earth, and of earthly life. He has brought Israel to the borders of the Promised Land. He has seen a generation die in the wilderness. He has seen Aaron die. He has seen his own ardent hope of putting the crown on his long life-work—he has seen that die. With what feelings must he have heard God say, "Get thee up into this mountain, . . . and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession : and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people"! No ; not even his bones, —unlike those of Joseph, which Israel has been carrying with them in a coffin all these forty years,—not even his bones are to be carried across Jordan ; and all this, he knows, is for his sin ! Doubtless he had

prayed fervently that God would grant him the dearest wish of his heart, that he might yet lead Israel over: very fervently he must have prayed, when God had to stop his mouth by saying to him, "Speak no more unto Me of this matter" (Deut. iii. 26).

The knowledge that his prayer was denied, the fact that his mouth was shut as regards this longing of his, must have burned deep into his spirit the thought of his sin, that day at the rock in Kadesh. What a discipline this must have been to the imperial spirit of Moses!—worse to bear than the thorn in the flesh given to Paul. Ah, what a long dark shadow even one sin may cast! What bitter disappointment may flow into the life, and colour its whole after-current, in consequence of one sin! Life, because of it, may lose its earthly crown, as in the case of Moses. For him to have led Israel so far, and yet not to enter the Promised Land; for him to have tasted Canaan's fruit, to have seen its beauty, to have dreamed many dreams about it, and yet not to enter; for him to see Israel so near rest, and yet not to behold the wilderness-wanderers enjoying it at last; for him to think of his servant having the privilege, the honour denied to himself—his the toil, the patience, the frustrated hope, and Joshua's the fruition, the reward,—all this must have greatly exercised the spirit of Moses, and doubtless, under God, have disciplined him much in meekness. For, like Jonathan with David, in later days, so he with Joshua, "he strengthened his hand in God." He envied not; he murmured not; he accepted the chastening, without questioning the love and favour of the hand that afflicted. So, at God's bidding, and with all these thoughts in him, he ascends to the highest peak of the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah,



and surveys the land. How far the view, and how fair! His eye was not dim, and his eagle glances scanned the country from Hermon to Kadesh, and from the deep trench of the Jordan valley to the surf-beat coast of the sea.

What would he not see, when the Lord showed him the land! Galilee lay before him, and its lake, where, in the later days, sacred feet would tread, and words and works of grace would reveal God Himself as manifest in the flesh. Did he mark the place, we wonder, where, 1500 years later, he was himself to be seen, by astonished disciples, along with Elias, beside his transfigured Lord? Tabor and Carmel, Calvary and Olivet, Shiloh and Mizpeh, Jerusalem and Bethlehem—there, before him, lay scenes which, by and by, will be filled with the most memorable persons and events of the world's entire history. Did Moses, as he gazed, behold, under the Lord's showing, aught of the glory of that history of which the land he looked on was to be the theatre? Did the shadow of the cross, too, fall on his spirit? Did the tremor, as of the earthquake that opened the graves and released the quickened saints, thrill his frame? or did the flash of the bright cloud, that carried heavenward an ascending Saviour, fill him with a death-conquering sense of triumph, even now that he was himself about to die? Much he saw with the eye of sense: how much with the eye of the seer? Doubtless his vision filled his spirit, even on the brink of the grave, with a refreshing such as all "the springs of Pisgah," at its base, could not have given to the thirsty Israelites.

And there are souls still, like that of Moses, that dwell on Pisgah's summit, and thence get bright visions of the Promised Land. From the peak of many a pro-

mise they gaze over the length and breadth of Israel's inheritance, with many a prayer that they may enter in, and with a mighty yearning. Oh, that they could enter in! Oh, that that Land of Promise might be theirs, and theirs in their own lifetime! "Why are His chariots so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of His chariots?" Promise upon promise, like peak upon peak, make the Scriptures to them a mountain-land of glorious outlooks; and every summit shows, to some of God's dear saints, a kingdom on earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and Jesus reigning among His own redeemed. And how the vision widens, and brightens, as they gaze! A world is seen of millennial peace, where nation shall not war against nation; where no man shall say to his brother, Know the Lord, for all shall know Him from the least even to the greatest. What a scene they gaze on! And how contrasted with the sinfulness and selfishness, the envy, cruelty, passion, and vileness that now degrade humanity and deface the earth! No wonder the vision ravishes; no wonder the gazer on the mountain peak cries out, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

"When creation, in her pangs,  
 Heaves her heavy groan;  
 When Thy Salem's exiled sons  
 Breathe their bitter moan;  
 When Thy widowed, weeping Church,  
 Looking for a home,  
 Sendeth up her silent sigh,  
 'Come, Lord Jesus, come!'  
 Hear then in love, O Lord, the cry,  
 In heaven, Thy dwelling-place on high."

Did not our late revered and beloved father and pastor live on such a Pisgah summit, and gaze into

that Promised Land, and long with his whole soul to enter in? Yet the King came not. The prayer, in that sense, was not answered—the longing, under that form, was not satisfied. Like Moses the servant of the Lord, who died there in the land of Moab, his was the vision only. Now death has brought the transcendent fulfilment, and placed him, with Moses and Elias, beside his transfigured and glorified Lord in the true Promised Land.

#### PISGAH'S SIDES: A BURIAL PLACE.

“So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab. . . . But no man knoweth of his sepulchre.” No man knoweth of his sepulchre, for God buried him in some valley or hollow of that Nebo-range, whose summits had afforded him such glorious outlooks on the promised possession. Were we to moralize on this, we might say that so it often happens. Many find their grave close by the place, or near to the time of their vision of life's great inheritance. The hill whence they descry the object of their longing becomes, in a sense, their grave. Or, we might put it thus: The Pisgah that reveals their life's goal becomes their monument in death. This largely holds good in the lower departments of human effort, as well as in the higher. With much toil men climb and climb after their heart's desire. At length they cry, not “I have *found* it,” but “I have *seen* it,” and then they die—die, like Moses, within sight of the Promised Land; and the hill which, with so much labour, they have surmounted to obtain the vision becomes their monument and grave. How many, with lifelong toil, amass wealth, and having got it, and just seen the land it

opens up to them, they die ; and their laboriously accumulated riches are their monument. So it is with learning ; so with all earthly good. Life is full of labour of this sort ; the close of life is full of such visions of the desired, yet unattained ; and human history is a graveyard full of monuments of strenuous effort and unsatisfied desire.

But if we climb a loftier Pisgah, and look out on nobler things, we shall have a worthier monument to commemorate our striving and our vision. Faith in God, like that of Moses, earnest prayerfulness, meekness, patience, fortitude, lifelong self-sacrifice for the good of others—these, fostered and practised throughout life, lead to a Pisgah summit, whence glorious views are seen ; and in their loved and honoured influence and remembrance they form a monument more lasting than the mountains of Moab. When the heavens shall be wrapped together as a scroll, and the earth is all aflame, and the elements of it are melting with fervent heat, such a character and life will be held in divine regard, and the works they have accomplished will endure as an eternal reward.

“No man knoweth of his sepulchre.” Perhaps the object of this was, not so much the prevention of an idolatrous reverence of the bones of Moses, as to prevent their removal into Canaan. God’s sentence of exclusion must be without any compromise. Moses was not to enter the land ; not even his dust must be laid there. His exiled remains must be a lasting witness to the severity of God against the sin even of a saint. His illustrious gifts, his extraordinary services, cannot condone one act of disobedience. Atoning blood can cleanse from all sin, but unparalleled service cannot compound for even one offence. It will be good for

Israel to see, and to remember, that sin even in Moses is sin, and heinous sin ; and that God, though Moses' friend, will let the rod fall heavily upon him when he forgets God's honour and violates His command.

There may have been another reason, too, why no man should know of his sepulchre. Neither curiosity, nor reverential regard for his grave, had they known it, nor the feeling of his being only in part removed from them, had his bones been brought into Canaan, must intervene between them and their looking now to Joshua as their God-given leader. There might have been such a reverence for the dead as would have marred God's message and leading by the living. There might have been such a lingering over the grave of Moses, in thought or in deed, as would have hindered the following of Joshua. Such a state of mind none would have more severely condemned than Moses himself ; but God made it simply, in the literal sense, impossible, by keeping any man from knowing where the grave of Moses was. And he is but poorly acquainted with human nature and very circumscribed in his experience who does not see the application which this fact has, from time to time, to the circumstances of churches and congregations of all denominations.

If we invite you to see here, also, a local and individual application, let us recognize in this, not the arbitrariness of the preacher, but rather one of the wise and loving purposes of Providence, which we are blind if we do not see, and wilful if we do not strive to learn. When eminent pastors are taken away, some of those who have been fed by them with knowledge and understanding are perhaps tempted to think that, because the familiar pitcher is removed, the fountain



itself is dry. Surely, however, this were to do dishonour to God. This were to impugn His Providence, which removes us when our work is done, and appoints others who still have work to do. This were to cast discredit even on the mission of a Moses himself; for if his service has not ripened God's Israel for a different leading, when God shall see meet to give it, one great part of the work given him of God to do has failed of accomplishment.

We mourn the loss of the aged, the honoured, the beloved. We cherish their memory with reverence and affection. But, none the less, it is a divine voice that calls our tearful eyes away from the empty place, or the mounded grave, and says, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel" (Josh. i. 2).

#### PISGAH'S BASE: ITS SPRINGS.

We have looked at the solitary figure on Pisgah's summit, gazing across to the longed-for land. We have looked, in thought, at the unknown grave in the ravine of Pisgah's slopes. We would look yet again at the mountain's base, and there we see Ashdoth-pisgah—*i.e.*, "the springs of Pisgah" (Deut. iv. 49).

Pisgah's summit commands visions of the promised Canaan. Pisgah's slopes and base yield copious springs. Such "springs" enable us the better to climb such summits; and mountains which command such glorious prospects are just those which afford such springs. Saints who live on high, near to God, and who spend much of their spiritual strength in the rapt contemplation of what the promises spread out before

them, make of their Pisgah a well ; and how copious, fresh, and gladdening are the springs that gush out around its base !

We, beloved brethren, think to-day of a Pisgah, and of one who got thence many a sweet vision in and through the glorious promises. And we think, also, of the "wells" of that Pisgah,—wells at which we, and many, many thousands of God's Israel besides, have drunk and been refreshed, and thereby been induced to climb higher, and yet higher, into that mountain too.

We have drunk of this Pisgah spring, have we not?—

" I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
 ' Come unto Me, and rest ;  
 Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
 Thy head upon My breast.' "

Or that other spring,—

" I lay my sins on Jesus,  
 The spotless Lamb of God ;  
 He bears them all, and frees us  
 From the accursed load."

Or that other spring,—

" Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face ;  
 Here would I touch and handle things unseen,  
 Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,  
 And all my weariness upon Thee lean."

Or that other spring,—

" When the weary, seeking rest,  
 To Thy goodness flee ;  
 When the heavy-laden cast  
 All their load on Thee ;  
 When the troubled, seeking peace,  
 On Thy name shall call ;



When the sinner, seeking life,  
 At Thy feet shall fall ;  
 Hear then in love, O Lord, the cry,  
 In heaven, Thy dwelling-place on high."

How many they are—these Pisgah springs ! How sweet they are ! and how full of the pure, precious water of the love of Christ, of the freeness and fulness of His grace, of the power of His cleansing and peace-speaking blood, of the tenderness and helpfulness of His sympathy, and of the fact and issues of His glorious coming again ! Wells they are, not at the base of the hill only, but refreshing to the climber all the way up : rills from the very fountain of life, from the river of God which is full of water, flowing to us through him.

My beloved flock, I have not thought it becoming to attempt any more special reference to our late revered senior pastor than the consideration of such a text as this has naturally suggested. Others, with far longer and more intimate acquaintance with him, of recognized position in the sister Church in England, and in our own, have, in this place, brought before you, with some fulness, many of the gifts, and graces, and services of him who was the first pastor of this congregation, the able exponent and earnest defender of evangelical truth, and the sweetest singer God has ever given to our Scottish Israel.

It would be alike superfluous and presumptuous in me to attempt to add to what they have so well said,—taking into account this fact especially, that, though for fully two years Dr. Bonar's colleague, his long continued and increasing feebleness prevented my enjoying much or close fellowship with him. But this I gratefully testify, that always when I did see him,—

with only one or two such exceptions as exceeding feebleness occasioned,—he never failed to pour out his heart in prayer to God for you, our people, and for me. The simplicity of these prayers, their tenderness, their large loving-heartedness, and the nearness to God which they breathed, never failed to melt me, and to draw out my heart to the dear old man, so feeble in body, so surely a prince with God.

I have a deep sense of the congregation being greatly poorer through his removal,—poorer in those spiritual influences which his name and his prayers secured for us. But we must think of One on the hill of God, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” who knows our need, and who can supply it; and who prays for us too: who can pour out on us, also, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and give us Pisgah springs and Pisgah prospects here, and the full fruition of the heavenly Canaan by and by. With loving, grateful memories, as we often look back on the past, let us, also, reverently and hopefully, listen to this divine word which, like a trumpet, summons soul and will forward into the future,—

“Moses my servant is dead; NOW THEREFORE ARISE, GO OVER THIS JORDAN, THOU, AND ALL THIS PEOPLE, UNTO THE LAND WHICH I DO GIVE TO THEM, EVEN TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.”



# Sermon

*PREACHED IN THE NORTH PARISH CHURCH, KELSO,  
ON THE  
AFTERNOON OF SABBATH, 3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 1837,  
BY THE REV. HORATIUS BONAR,  
BEING THE FIRST SERMON PREACHED BY HIM AS  
MINISTER OF THAT PARISH.*



## Sermon.

BY THE REV. HORATIUS BONAR, KELSO.

*"And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."*—MARK ix. 29.

MY dear brethren, I do not come to address you after the manner of man's wisdom, nor with words of human eloquence, but to speak to your souls of the things which concern your eternity ;—to stir you up to seek in good earnest salvation for yourselves and for others. It is a light thing that you should be attracted and pleased,—even were I able to do so,—but it is no light matter that you should be moved to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, God working in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. It is a light thing that the admiration of many should be obtained ; but it is no light matter that the multitudes who are now far from God should be moved to return to Him from whom they "have revolted and gone" (Jer. v. 23). The gratification of an hour is all that depends upon the one ; but eternity,—a sinner's eternity,—hangs upon the other.

Therefore it is that I have chosen for this day's meditations, a subject which affords but little scope for eloquence or fancy, but which allows me a very full opportunity of speaking simply and with searching closeness of your present religious state, and of pointing out to you what our text suggests as the remedy for the very worst state of spiritual malady under which an individual, or a church, can labour. It is for this end that I have chosen these words to discourse

from, on the occasion of my coming amongst you, that I may, at the very commencement of my ministry, declare what appears to be one of the chief causes of our low and languid condition ;—that I may show you how much, how *very much* depends upon the people of God,—upon their “prayer and fasting,”—in the way of securing the divine remedy.

We have need, my brethren, to look well around us, and to consider the foundations upon which we are building for the life eternal. We have need to look within us, and consider well what sort of religion it really is which we profess ; what sort of devotion it is with which we exercise our souls. For it is to be feared that much of what is called religion with us, is a mere outward name—a shadow, a spectre, with nothing of solidity or life. The kind of religion which men now prefer, is that which will not go very deep into their spiritual nature, nor search very narrowly the secret recesses of the heart. They love a religion somewhat softened in its aspect and outlines, whose doctrines may be well adorned and set forth in words of human eloquence, so as to gratify the ear and attract the fancy. They talk of prizing “the cross,” it may be,—but then it seems to them too rude and bare ; they would have its nakedness covered over with something more of ornament. And thus adorned, it no doubt attracts the eye of many who deemed it foolishness before. But then it is the simple cross no more. The “enticing words of man’s wisdom” have made it of none effect. The faith of those who thus receive it, stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. It speaks no more of Jesus only, and His all-sufficiency. It attracts many to Him now, who are not drawn of the Father (John vi. 44).



These men, of whom we are speaking, have no objection to hear you discourse upon the doctrines of religion and mysteries of faith, provided you do this eloquently, so as to gratify their taste, and lead them smoothly along. But search their hearts ; come close to their consciences ; strike deep, strike home, and straightway they are offended. Speak to them of faith, and they will listen to you with attention, and perhaps commend your discourse ; but tell them that faith is altogether a world-overcoming, self-renouncing principle that hangs upon God alone ; tell them that if they have not cast off that world, renounced that self, and learned to hang entirely upon God, their religion is but a name, their faith a mockery, and they will turn away in weariness, if not in disgust. Speak to them of prayer,—its nature, its reasonableness, its duty,—and they will give all heed to your address ; but call upon them solemnly to a *life of prayer* and heavenly fellowship,—tell them that prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air,—speak to them closely of the example of our Lord, who spent whole nights in prayer upon the solitary mountains, and they will smile at your enthusiasm, or be offended at your importunity.

Now, it is just in order to expose this false appetite in religion,—this false taste in devotion,—that we must bring the plain and naked truth to bear upon their consciences, that they may see how much of this religion of theirs consists merely in a desire to be gratified. We must go at once to the root of the matter,—to the very vitals of the Christian life, and lay them all before the eye. We must take men from general discoursing *about* Christ, to Christ Himself—to His life as the model of theirs. We must take them to His labours, to His

prayers, to His fastings, and ask them wherein they have walked in His footsteps, or approved themselves His followers. We must take them to the high examples of patriarchs, of prophets, and apostles, and show how they walked with God in prayer. We must take them to the Christian's closet, and show them his hidden life, his hidden intercourse with God, his joys and his sorrows, of which the world knows nothing, and with which it cannot intermeddle. When lamenting that there is such a melancholy deficiency in the warmth, the simplicity, the zeal of our day; when complaining of the abounding iniquity on every side, we would remind them that it is not by complaints and lamentations that this deficiency is to be supplied; that there is another and more efficacious remedy put into their hands by God,—that “this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”

The original allusion in our text was, as you are aware, to the casting out of devils. A case had been brought to the disciples,—one of the most virulent and malignant kind. A father had brought his son to the disciples, possessed with a devil, and in the most deplorable circumstances. The disciples were unable to cast him out. It was a case too peculiar and too hard for them. The young man was then brought to Jesus immediately upon His descent from the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus, after reproving the faithlessness of His disciples, spake to the unclean spirit, which came forth at His command. When He came into the house, after performing the cure, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast him out?” He told them, that this was a case of the worst and most hopeless kind, and that it, therefore, required greater faith than was necessary in other cases;—“This

kind," says He, "can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

Though the circumstances of this case are different from anything which now takes place amongst us, yet the principle upon which our Lord's remark is founded remains the same. Though Satan is no longer permitted visibly to take possession of and exercise his cruel power over the bodies of men, there is a mighty influence which he still possesses. Though he was seen like lightning falling from heaven, yet it was only that he might come down to the earth, "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. xii. 12). He is working with all the power of his consummate craft to lead men captive at his will, and to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. Manifold are his wiles. He works secretly now, indeed, not openly as in former ages ; yet, not the less on that account are his snares to be dreaded, yea, all the more, because he has hidden from the eye of sense his own revolting aspect, and taken on the veil of an angel of light. He sees some professors careless, and he lulls them into still deeper slumber by making them believe that all is well. He sees others with a fair and honourable character among men, and he persuades them that, having this, they need no more. He sees others following the full external round of religious duty, that with the more contentment they may pursue their career of worldliness, and he persuades them that it is foolish and unscriptural to be righteous overmuch. He sees others zealous in the faith, and his plan is to lead them over the limits of sobriety into the paths of error and delusion. He sees others restless in feeling and unstable in opinion, and he urges them on in pursuit of novelties in doctrine in order to feed that

excitement which may keep them from following "the footsteps of the flock" (Song i. 8). He sees others timorous and slothful, and by beguiling them into the belief that it would be presumption in them to adopt any opinions not sanctioned by "the majority," he keeps them from founding their belief on Scripture alone, and causes them to steal the words of the Lord every one from his neighbour (Jer. xxiii. 30). He sees others zealous to maintain good works, and he tells them that private devotion is quite a secondary thing, to be gone about at leisure hours, and that their work can be accomplished as well without prayer and fasting as with it. Others he finds willing enough to do something, but afraid almost to stir a finger lest they offend others, and he strives to bring those men still more under the *slavery of public opinion*, so that, unless seconded by it, they are afraid to move a single step or utter a single word.

But let me make a fuller application of the text ; showing how the expression, "this kind," refers to our own spiritual circumstances, and pointing out the great and efficacious remedy suggested by our Lord for such cases,—“this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.” Now, as the irreligion of our day is of much deeper root and stronger texture than that of former times, so must the means for removing it be more vigorous and decisive. Whatever might have formerly availed for effecting the cure, nothing now will be of service but the strongest measures. The disease is more malignant ; the obstacles to be overcome are greater than ever ; for “in the last days perilous times shall come :” “Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists ; whereby we know that it is the last time” (2 Tim. iii. 1 ; 1 John ii. 18).



*First*, then, let me observe, the *unbelief* of our day is one of the most formidable obstacles which lie in our way. By unbelief, I do not mean that bold infidelity which has so extensively lifted its front amongst us. I speak of that subtlety of Satan whereby he has contrived to rob spiritual things of all their power and reality ; and if not to lead us to doubt of their existence, at least to withdraw us from their close contact and immediate influence ; to deprive them of their *personality*, and to present them to us as vague, airy abstractions, which float through the understanding, but which never close round the heart.

Unbelief is the opposite of faith ; and faith is said by the apostle to be “the *substance* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Unbelief, then, is that which reduces things hoped for to a shadow, and takes from us the demonstration of things not seen. It is this consummation of his hellish craft that Satan is now seeking to achieve. The world is not yet ripe for denying God with the open lip, and throwing off altogether the yoke of spiritual things. His object, therefore, is to remove the substance while he allows us to retain the shadow ; to extract the jewels while he lets us keep the casket ; to destroy “the power” while he suffers us to retain “the name.” This is unbelief in its subtlest and most specious form—eating out the vitals of religion, while the skeleton stands entire in every joint and bone. He seems, at last, to have discovered wherein the mighty strength of Christianity lay ;—even in the closeness of that contact with the world unseen into which it brings us, and the consequent influence which things spiritual thus possess over every meaner hope and joy. He is, therefore, now busied in removing these realities to a distance, that he may neutralize the power of the reli-

gion of Christ. Both heaven and hell is he seeking to convert into shadows ; and even to hide *himself* from the eye of men ; persuading them to doubt his own existence, and to deny his personality ; pointing the jest against himself, and scoffing at men's notions of his power and presence, as the dreams of the credulous, the dregs of a darker time, too gross and irrational for an enlightened age like this!

He is interposing a veil between things possessed and things hoped for,—and that is *unbelief*. He is drawing an impassable gulf between things seen and unseen,—and that is unbelief. He is cutting off the communication between time and eternity, severing the link that bound the two together,—and that is unbelief. He is persuading us that the present is the only substantial reality, and the future but a dim and distant shadow,—a possibility, or, at the most, a probability, but not a certainty ;—and that is unbelief. The mighty work of unbelief, however, which he is especially striving to effect, is to draw a veil between us and Christ. This is the grand design which he seems especially to be labouring to effect in these last days. To separate Christ from the world, and the world from Christ, yea, to take Christ out of the world altogether, and to make us believe we can do well enough without Him,—this, this is especially his aim ! To take Christ out of our religion, out of our theology, out of our education, out of our government, out of our thoughts and hearts,—this he labours by every agency to effect !

Well has he succeeded ! With the withering blight of this awful unbelief has he laid waste many a fair portion of the vineyard of the Lord. I appeal to you, my brethren, who know something of the reality of spiritual things, if you have not, in some measure, felt the ruinous influence of this devastating curse ? There



are some of you, I am sure, if not many, who have often said to yourselves, and, perhaps, remarked to others,—“surely something is wrong with us ;—there is a chilling, straitening influence abroad,—the water of life flows languidly along, as if it were drying up,—the pastures are seared ;—a cloud seems to be drawn over the Sun of righteousness, so that we feel not now, as once our fathers did, the genial warmth and brightness of His healing wings.” Have you not often, perhaps unconsciously, given vent to feelings such as these? And, when in much disquietude of soul, you have anxiously asked yourselves, what can be the reason of all this? you have made many a conjecture as to the cause of such a state of things, ascribing it to this circumstance and that,—to this and that event,—to your own deficiency or to the feebleness and remissness of those who were set over you. Have you not? Well, and were you satisfied with your reasons? were you convinced that you had discovered the very root of the evil? Or, were you not, after all, compelled to feel that there was still something about it which you could not comprehend?

In such circumstances, were you never led to conjecture that there might be a work of the evil one in all this ;—a deep-laid and well-veiled device for marring your whole work without manifestly interfering at all? Were your eyes never opened to see the snare of unbelief in which he is now so skilfully entangling his thousands?—to see how his object is to cut off all communication between you and your God, to eat out the core of that faith which is the very substance of things hoped for? Yes, my brethren, search and see if this be not Satan’s mighty snare,—if this be not the influence with which he has infected the atmosphere

all around you. This is the reason why you draw the breath of spiritual life so heavily and with such an oppressive effort. This is the reason why your eye is oftentimes so dim and clouded that you cannot see afar off, nor realize, with any vividness of spiritual perception, the glory that is yet to be revealed. Satan has clouded the atmosphere with that hellish vapour which makes you breathe so heavily, and drawn over your eyes that specious veil which so effectually, though unconsciously, contracts your vision.

And what, my brethren, are you to do, with such a withering, darkening influence abroad? Who shall give you power to pierce these overshadowing clouds, and rise above the region of their oppressive vapours? How shall you once more breathe the fresh air of heaven, and rejoice in the purity of its blessed light,—regain your lost freshness of vision, and look freely out once more upon the morning star? My brethren, the remedy is at hand: “Prayer and *fasting* ;”—here is the appointed cure,—the cure which God has put into your hands, and of whose efficacy He has assured you. I do not mean, at this time, to enter into the illustration of these particular duties,—*both* of which are too exactly specified to allow us to suppose that *either* can be spared. You understand generally what they are; and there is not so much necessity for explaining their nature as for enforcing their practice. It is to the latter, then, rather than to the former point that I wish to turn your thoughts.

Here, then, is the evil on the one hand, and here is the cure on the other. You feel and lament the disease, will you not put forth the hand and apply the remedy? You have often, it may be, said to yourselves in weariness and disappointment, “It is all in vain; I labour, but there is no fruit; I plan and strive, but there is no

profit." And why is it thus? why is your way hedged up with thorns (Hosea ii. 6), and why are the steps of your strength straitened? (Job xviii. 7). Because you have stinted your prayers and *fastings*, and perhaps also worshipped the labour of your own hands. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name." You thought it enough if you were active and zealous; or, at least, if you asked the general, customary blessing upon your labours. But the heavens are iron and brass; hard and impenetrable: and how can you expect your customary, cold petitions to pierce so dark, so dense a mass of covering? No; it is not by a few general, formal prayers that this withering blight of unbelief is to be charmed out of our atmosphere. It is by being instant in prayer day and night; by redeeming many an hour for prayer which we are wont to spend in vanity, or even, it may be, in the acquisition of what we may call "useful knowledge;" it is by praying as individuals, by praying as families, by uniting in prayer with each other, that this great work is to be accomplished; "for this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

I have told you, my brethren, that there is a blight shed over us by Satan; that the Prince of the power of the air has infected the very atmosphere with his oppressive influence. But I would also tell you, that above and beyond this unbelieving atmosphere, there is a cloud charged with heaven's own refreshing rain; a cloud which God has hung above this land of ours, and which in mercy He still keeps suspended there, full of genial showers. It is to draw down the riches of that cloud that we call you to prayer and fasting. And shall I tell you, that there is such a glorious cloud floating above you, and shall you not be anxious to draw down upon yourselves the plenteous showers

of heaven, that "the parched ground may become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water"? Impossible! You must surely be desirous of blessings so rich and plenteous. Let then your prayer and fasting come up before God, like the prayer of Elijah upon Mount Carmel, even until seven times, and be assured there shall come an abundant rain. The showers of heaven shall descend upon us,—upon our church, upon our nation, upon our parish, upon our schools, upon our families! Is this not worth the praying for, even though our faith should be tried for many a weary day and hour? "Oh, it is already (to use the language of another) as if heaven had begun to close upon us. How sparingly does the dew of the Spirit fall. How few arise from the dead; and how long is it since a plenteous shower of heavenly rain has refreshed us. My friends, what is the cause of this? Has an Elijah stood forth in the midst of us with his word, 'As the Lord liveth, there shall not be dew nor rain three years.' Or does Elijah sleep, forgetting to re-open what was shut up? Church of God, thou little flock of Israel, thou people of His possession, thou art as Elijah! Yes, thy voice can call forth clouds of rain. Arise and call upon thy God."

*Second.* The deadness and apathy of our day may be comprehended in the words of our text, as things which come not forth but by prayer and fasting. These points we shall touch but briefly, as we have already in part noticed them under our former head. Our valley is truly a valley of dry bones,—exceeding many and exceeding dry. There is not only a blight upon the pastures, but there is an absolute dearth. The absence of the Sun of righteousness is most deplorably felt in the utter coldness and lifelessness which are shed over us. The external aspect of the frame is



fair and goodly, but the pulse has ceased to throb, the blood has ceased to circulate, the living spirit is away. The outward form of the temple is still preserved ;—its walls, its courts, its priests, its altars, its sacrifices ;—but the Shekinah has departed.

We preach ;—but where are the living words that once poured themselves from lips touched with fire from the ever-burning altar ;—words which not merely “took with ravishment the thronging audience,” but which, sharper than a two-edged sword, penetrated the very soul and spirit? You hear ;—but where are the hungry, thirsty souls that used to drink in refreshment from the preacher’s lips, and go home rejoicing in the goodness of God’s holy place? You receive the sacraments ;—but where is the strength imparted from that consecrated bread,—the overflowing joy communicated by that hallowed wine ;—when men’s feet were made “like hind’s feet” (Ps. xviii. 33), treading upon the high places of the earth, and having the range of mountains for their pastures? (Job xxxix. 8). You read the sacred word ;—but where is the reviving power with which every syllable was wont to overflow? You pray ;—but where is the breathing of the spirit, the bursting forth of the soul, the prostration of the whole man? You labour in your works of piety among old and young ;—but where are the glorious effects once felt among us, when old and young were melted into penitence and dissolved in love? You name the name of Jesus ;—but even that name seems to have lost its quickening power in your mouths.

This kind then can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting. It is only in this way that we can expect this death-like apathy to be removed, and life diffused once more through the chambers of death. And, oh, if the people of God who can prize in some

measure the value of spiritual blessings, would but set themselves in good earnest by prayer and *fasting* to implore them ; if they who fear the Lord would speak often one to another, then would the Lord hearken and hear (Mal. iii. 16), and they should receive for themselves, for their families, for their church, for their nation, for the world, the abundance of spiritual life and health according to our Saviour's promise, which abides still the same to us as to the church of old,—“ If *two* of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven ” (Matt. xviii. 19). Ask, then, and ye shall receive. Ask life, and ye shall have it, both for yourselves and for as many as you intercede for. Ask a revival, and ye shall have it. Ask the Holy Spirit, and He shall be given unto you (Luke xi. 13). All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing ye shall receive.

I intended to have gone over several other particulars, which we might include under the expression “this kind ;”—several other evils which are not to be removed, several other blessings which are not to be obtained but by “prayer and fasting.” I intended to have laid before you the spirit of worldliness which prevails so fatally amongst us ; the frivolity and folly, the vanity and show which scatter everything like serious thought and incapacitate the soul for communion with heavenly things ; that false charity which thinks no man the worse for his religious opinions however unscriptural ; that religious indifference which treats doctrinal opinions as the mere wranglings of controversy, which, while for the sake of peace and harmony it would exclude *religion* whenever *it* might give offence, would overturn the world sooner than give up one tittle of its opinions in any secular matter ; that subtle



scepticism,—Satan's subtlest delusion as it is his last,—which says, "After all, there can be no certainty for fallible man, and perhaps I who believe in the Bible may be wrong, and my neighbour who denies it may be right." These prevalent evils I might have noticed had time not failed me. But I must leave you to extract from what I have already said the application of my text to these different topics. These can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.

In concluding, I cannot help again calling your thoughts to the solemn duties here set before you. They are duties which, however carelessly and imperfectly attended to by many, who have a high and fair profession, are yet duties without which we have no right to expect the blessings which we profess to desire. It is not mere bustling and speaking that will bring down the blessing. It is not the wisdom of our schemes, it is not the earnestness of our zeal, it is not the favourable position of our circumstances, it is not any nor all these together that will draw down the promised grace. They are right and praise-worthy, but they are not the blessing. It is a matter of devout acknowledgment to God that even those things remain,—but still they are not the promised Spirit. Therefore, while we plan and labour and are zealous in this best of works, let us never forget that the obstacles we have to encounter, the enemies we have to face, are not to be surmounted in this way alone. Let us remember that this kind cometh not out but by prayer and fasting.

Here then, my brethren, is your stronghold, your refuge, your weapons of war. Here is the "tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men" (Song iv. 4),—of men who through the prayer of faith have

been made strong out of weakness, have waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens (Heb. xi. 34). By this we stand against the wiles of the devil. By this we wrestle, not merely with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places. 'Tis prayer then that puts on the whole-armour of God ; 'tis prayer that girds up the loins of your mind ; 'tis prayer that feeds your lamps and keeps them alway burning. 'Tis prayer that burnishes the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation. 'Tis prayer that edges the sword of the Spirit and makes it quick and powerful. 'Tis prayer that sustains us in every conflict and gives us at last the victory as it gave to Jacob of old, when, after wrestling all night with God at Peniel, he exclaimed, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

In coming amongst you here, my brethren, the first thing I ask of you is *your prayers*. Not your customary, your general, your formal prayers. Keep these idle compliments,—these regular, it may be, but too often unmeaning pieces of courtesy, to yourselves. These I ask not. If these are all you have to give, I shall be poor indeed. If I have nothing but these to hold up my feeble hands, how shall Israel's victory over Amalek be ours? What I ask is your earnest, your unwearied, your believing, wrestling prayers. Nothing else will do, for "this kind cometh out by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

Oh, my brethren, if thus we were to meet each other every Sabbath day, what might not these days of rest be to us?—days of refreshing,—days of unearthly joy, earnest of the everlasting day! If thus we were to come together into the sanctuary, what might not be the blessing expected, the wonders done in the midst of

us by the right hand of God ! If our sermons were, so to speak, the concentrated essence of a whole week's prayers ; if your hearts were the prepared soil of a whole week's converse with your Bible and your God, what might not our meetings here be on each returning Sabbath ! What might not this place be to us all,—“None other but the house of God, yea the very gate of heaven.” What might not be the blessing which would overflow upon all around us ;—upon the careless professor, upon the unconverted multitude, upon the old and upon the young ; upon our church, our schools, our whole parish together ! Thus would we grow in grace and strength, rising to the measure of the stature of perfect men in Christ. Thus would we triumph over every difficulty, every obstacle, every opposition. Thus would we silence the gainsayer, and find that “when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Prov. xvi. 7). Thus would we know the walk of faith, and learn the life of love,—that love which is the fulfilling of the law—that love which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, which vaunteth not itself, which is not puffed up, which doth not behave itself unseemly, which seeketh not her own, which is not easily provoked, which thinketh no evil, which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, which never faileth (1 Cor. xiii. 4-8). Thus would we be united in inseparable bonds, being of one heart and of one soul ;—thus would we enjoy and impart the blessing.

To this, then, my brethren, I call you, at the very outset of my ministry among you, that through your prayers and the anointing of the Holy Ghost, I may come to you in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel

of Christ. It is to prayer I urge you—to prayer and *fasting*—to prayer as the appointed remedy for all those spiritual maladies which we profess to lament—to prayer as the means of a revival in the midst of us—to prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the strength of that Holy Spirit who maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered—to prayer for yourselves, prayer for your nation, prayer for your church, prayer for your parish, *prayer for ME!*

Come then, my people, enter into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee until the indignation be overpast (Isa. xxvi. 20). Amid the coldness of a decaying world, here find vitality and warmth. Amid the withering blight of a false-hearted profession, here find sincerity and vigour. Amid the unbelief and emptiness of a world that has forgotten its eternal destiny, here find reality and substance. Amid the profane indifference of men, who have cast off the love of Christ and make no difference between His friends and foes, here find decision and devotedness. Amid the vanity, the folly, the frivolity, the abounding wickedness of a world now ripe for judgment and preparing for the slaughter, here take your stand and be strong in the Lord. Amid the lukewarmness of a Laodicean church, here find animation and zeal. And in the prospect of the gathering storm, that is to desolate the earth, foretelling the speedy Advent of the Son of man (Luke xxi. 25-28, Rev. xvi. 13-15), here find security and shelter, protection and peace; for “because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. iii. 10).

# Sermon

*PREACHED IN CHALMERS MEMORIAL CHURCH,  
GRANGE, EDINBURGH,  
ON THE  
MORNING OF SABBATH, 11th SEPTEMBER 1887,  
BY THE REV. HORATIUS BONAR, D.D.,  
BEING HIS LAST SERMON.*





## Sermon.

BY THE REV. HORATIUS BONAR, D.D., EDINBURGH.

*“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”—MATT. xxiv. 37-39.*

HE who is “the faithful and true witness,” even the Son of God, who came to bear witness to the truth, gave testimony here concerning our world that most deeply concerns us all, and that more and more as the ages roll away; and this testimony is for our warning. He selects two eras, two epochs, two periods, specially. These two periods are “the days of Noah,” and “the days of the Son of man.” He places them before *us*, just as He did before the men of His day. Mark what these periods are. They are not eras of light, but of darkness. They are eras of judgment and of terror. He selects them for our warning. He speaks this truth aloud in the ears of a careless world, which shuts its ears against everything but business, vanity, and pleasure. He tells them of what is yet before them, even the days of the Son of man. “In the days of Noah,”—that is, the one hundred and twenty years during which Noah preached, and warned, and besought in vain,—men listened, perhaps were interested for a while, and yet, in the end, were utterly heedless. Let us look at this; let us see what the Lord means to teach us, what He means to teach the Church and the world, you and me.

Observe, there is one thing that runs through the whole ; it is comprised in that word *rejection*—rejection of what is Divine, of what is supernatural,—rejection of the things of God : God and man come face to face ; and man says to God, I will have none of you,—“We will not have this man to reign over us.” It is a rejection which involves divers points.

*First.* Here we have in both cases,—in the case of “the days of Noah,” and in the case of “the days of the Son of man”—rejected *truth*. It was by truth that God was working among the antediluvians in their mad career of worldliness and corruption ; not by the truth as they would call it, but like the truth preached by Jonah,—“Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” So with Noah,—“Yet one hundred and twenty years, and the world shall be overflowed with water.” Here again was rejected truth ; and at all times we find it is Divine truth,—supernatural, directly from God, not reasoned out by man,—that is rejected. Men are willing enough to receive the conjectures, philosophies, and sentiments of human device ; but a message directly from the lips of Him who made them, and who shall be their judge, they will not receive. This is the world’s condemnation. The present is a lying age : the philosophy of this age is lying ; the literature of this age is lying. This age will receive anything that professes to be truth, except what comes from God.

*Second.* It is not merely rejected truth, but rejected *grace*. The message is not merely concerning judgment, it is “the exceeding riches of the grace of God,” which showed the Divine willingness to spare even the world in spite of its wickedness. “Grace ! grace !” The amount of meaning contained in that word

"grace"! It is by grace we are kept even for a single hour out of hell. We little realize what "grace" means. It is the source of whatever flows to us from God. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The word "grace" is constantly on our lips, but is little understood,—if not misunderstood, and abused for purposes of sin. "Grace! grace!" "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Amid all that mass of antediluvian iniquity, there came up a voice from the lips of God's own servant, proclaiming "Grace! grace!" That was rejected, and the world went down at last in the flood.

*Third.* Not only truth and grace, but *long-suffering* was rejected. This means more than grace—it means grace protracted, for, it may be, months, and years, and ages. God is unwilling to leave the sinner alone to perish. He is continually lifting up His voice in the midst of this ungodly world. Yea, God swear by Himself—"As I live . . . I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" In the prospect of the coming flood Noah would point to the ark he was building, giving repeated warnings—"Turn ye! turn ye!" But turn they would not. They rejected long-suffering. It was not simply righteousness that they rejected to their destruction. They rejected long-suffering grace. This will be the heaviest part of the sinner's eternal ruin; not because God would not be reconciled to him, but because he would not be reconciled to God. The sinner looked that long-suffering in the face, and said, "I will have none of it."

But there is one thing which rises above all these,—comprising all, but yet rising above them,—*a rejected person*. The messenger embodied all these in his own person and message. Noah was the embodiment of that grace in all its long-suffering. And the Son of man is still more the embodiment of Divine grace—of Divine long-suffering. The Jews rejected Him. He stood as one full of compassion, and loving-kindness, upon their own hill, looking down upon their own city, weeping—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often WOULD I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye WOULD NOT!" "I WOULD," but "YE WOULD NOT." To Jerusalem, to the world, to us, "I WOULD"—"YE WOULD NOT." I blessed—you would not be blessed. In both cases there is the rejection of a person. The rejection of an ambassador of peace, a royal ambassador, is the most heinous of national crimes. The heavenly ambassador rejected! Noah was only a man; but He whom they saw, heard, and of whose hand they could take hold, who entreated them to turn and live, and whom they rejected, was the Lord—the Lord from heaven.

I do not doubt that in the case of those who were lost in the flood, there was the stinging remembrance of Noah's words. Those words would come back again, and again, and again in the ears of those lost souls—O that we had listened to the message! In the case of those who have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, O think how, in that coming eternity, thoughts of past sermons, warnings, invitations, and messages of love, will come in upon the memory when too late!

All this is to come suddenly upon an unready world that shall get no more warning than what it has

had already. No second Sodom and Gomorrah! no second destruction of Jerusalem! "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments." In an hour when we think not, the Son of man cometh. Gird up your loins. You are living far too like the world. "Make ready;" for sudden destruction is coming upon an unready world. "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh"!

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[NOTE.—We are indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. Cameron of the Heriot-Watt College, for the report from which this sermon is printed.]





# Fragment

*OF A SPEECH PREPARED BY DR. BONAR  
FOR THE MEETING TO CELEBRATE HIS JUBILEE  
AS A MINISTER (5th APRIL 1888), BUT  
NOT DELIVERED.*



## Fragment.

HALF-A-CENTURY is a long stretch in the life and work of a minister, whatever that life or work may have been. It contains momentous history, of which eternity will take solemn cognisance. Filled up with shade and sunshine, with successes and disappointments, with useful and useless days,—its ten thousand mornings and evenings, summers and winters, have irrevocably come and gone; and in estimating its contents, for good or evil, we are utterly baffled. God only can estimate these.

Yet we cannot shut it out nor refuse to contemplate it. What has it been to us, and what has it been to the world of which we form a part?—these are questions which must be put and answered. In answering them we require calmness and honesty. Cheating ourselves with false reminiscences or with pretended forgetfulness is both folly and peril. Let memory, as it wanders over past days and scenes, be impartial, even though it be imperfect. There is but one memory that is altogether impartial and perfect, the memory of the righteous Judge of all; and, whatever be the failures in ours, nothing can wipe from His eternal memory, no, not one word that has ever been spoken, one act that has ever been done upon this earth of ours. That awful memory will one day confront us,—that memory will one day confound us with its everlasting accuracy, laying bare all deceptions, and putting to endless shame all save those who have taken refuge under that unfailing covenant, of which the

bright assurance is, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

It is more than half-a-century since I began my work. In 1831 a few students united together to visit a district in the High Street here, which visitation we carried on till we became preachers and entered on regular work. Mr. Lewis (afterwards Dr. Lewis), of Leith, asked me to take the mission work in his parish. He organized that mission well, and inspired his fellow-workers with zeal and devotedness. The district which he allotted to me had a population of more than 3000,—its streets and lanes were amongst the very worst in the town. But the work soon became pleasant, and we were welcomed even by the worst and wickedest. My commencement was of a peculiar kind. Mr. Lewis had secured a hall, which held about 200, in one of these lanes; and I was to occupy it every Sabbath, forenoon and afternoon, with the Sabbath school in the evening. It had hitherto been used by a small body of Roman Catholics. I had scarcely begun the forenoon service, when the door was thrown open, and a furious woman walked in, shouting, "My curse and the curse of God be upon you." But there was no disturbance, and the curse did not come; but in many ways, both among old and young, the blessing followed us. That was the starting-point of my work in Leith.

Through the energy of Dr. Lewis, numerous Sabbath schools were set on foot, and a band of devoted teachers secured. Two of these I think I ought to mention—Dr. Andrew Bonar, of Glasgow, and Dr. Thomas Smith, of the New College, Edinburgh. They were two of my most efficient teachers, and they proved themselves earnest fellow-workmen.

From Leith I went to Kelso, in November, 1837, from which my jubilee dates, to take charge of the new church there. I found there plenty of work, plenty of workmen, and plenty of sympathy,—zealous elders, zealous teachers, and zealous friends. The keynote which I struck was, “Ye must be born again;” and that message found its way into many hearts. It repelled some, but it drew many together, in what I may call the bond of regeneration; and I may here ask, Do we, with sufficient energy and point, proclaim that solemn truth with which our Master’s ministry began, and without which all religion is hollow and superficial? “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God;” and may not the feebleness and want of success, of which many of us have reason to complain, be traced to a lack of distinctness and precision in our announcement of this momentous message? Certainly that word did run and was glorified; nor had I ever reason to regret my adoption of this starting-point, or to feel that I had made a mistake in the prominence which I gave to that solemn and searching truth.

Until the Disruption came I had no access to the neighbouring parishes, but after that I found open doors and open ears in that populous district among all ranks of the people. Year after year the work grew and the people flocked to hear, till, finding the work too great, I secured the services of our dear friend, Mr. Stoddart, who laboured with amazing success and untiring diligence in the villages and farms around. And again, as the work continued to grow, I found it needful to get another workman—our beloved and lamented friend, Mr. Murray. These two were truly the evangelists of the Borders, and traversed

the three counties of Roxburgh, Berwick, and Northumberland, with blessed success; and the fruit of their labours remains to this day all over these Borders.

A great deal of the good work done in that district at that time was done by these two excellent men, so that I can speak the more freely of it, and bear testimony to the wide-spread blessing, whole villages being awakened, besides many stray souls, both young and old, gathered into the Church of God from various quarters.

The missionary work which thus went on for ten or twelve years was of the most striking kind; and the journals of these two men of God, in that wide Border district, would furnish narratives which the Church would rejoice to read. Many rebuffs we got, many angry letters, many threats of ecclesiastical censure, much experience of what would now be called "boycotting;" but in spite of all this the work went on, good was returned for evil, and the evangelists found themselves and their message becoming more and more acceptable.

In our many wanderings by Tweed and Teviot during the space of twenty-eight years, we were brought face to face with the romantic and the beautiful; but we met no steel-clad warrior of the Border, and were startled by no bugle-horn. Yet we did not miss them; for we came constantly across the path of the ambassador of peace going to or returning from some village gathering with the message of eternal life upon his lips, eager to tell of the anxious crowds to whom he had been pointing the way to the kingdom. We did not miss the warrior when we thus met the messenger of grace.

In June, 1866, I was called to Edinburgh; and here



I have spent twenty-two chequered years of my ministerial life. To recall its events, joyful and sorrowful, would be impossible. God has been gracious, and has not disowned the work and the message. Righteousness without works to the sinner, simply on his acceptance of the divine message concerning Jesus and His sufficiency,—this has been the burden of our good news. “Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.” It is one message, one gospel, one cross, one sacrifice, from which nothing can be taken, and to which nothing can be added. This is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending of our ministry. Sad and useless must be the ministry of any one to whom this gospel in its simplicity is not all in all.

The changes that have taken place in public opinion, in theological speculation, in ecclesiastical discipline, in religious sentiment, in spiritual thought, in conjectural criticism, in the value attached to belief and non-belief, in the new codes of hermeneutical law, and in the rejection of creeds, and, in the refusal of any guidance or control save those of science and philosophy, the adoption of culture,

## “In Me ye shall have Peace.”

LONG days and nights upon this restless bed,  
Of daily, nightly weariness and pain !—  
Yet Thou art here, my ever-gracious Lord,  
Thy well-known voice speaks not to me in vain :—  
“ In Me ye shall have peace ” !

The darkness seemeth long, and even the light  
No respite brings with it, no soothing rest  
For this worn frame ; yet in the midst of all  
Thy love revives. Father, Thy will is best.  
“ In Me ye shall have peace ” !

Sleep cometh not, when most I seem to need  
Its kindly balm. O Father, be to me  
Better than sleep ; and let these sleepless hours  
Be hours of blessed fellowship with Thee.  
“ In Me ye shall have peace ” !

Not always *seen* the wisdom and the love ;  
And sometimes hard to be believed, when pain  
Wrestles with faith, and almost overcomes.  
Yet even in conflict Thy sure words sustain :—  
“ In Me ye shall have peace ” !

Father, the flesh is weak ; fain would I rise  
Above its weakness into things unseen.  
Lift Thou me up ; give me the open ear,  
To hear the voice that speaketh from within :—  
“ In Me ye shall have peace ” !

Father, the hour is come ; the hour when I  
Shall with these fading eyes behold Thy face :  
And drink in all the fulness of Thy love ;—  
Till then, oh, speak to me Thy words of grace :—  
“ In Me ye shall have peace ” !

NOTE.—This Poem was found among Dr. BONAR's papers after his death.

# Note

*ON DR. BONAR'S PROPHETICAL VIEWS,*

*BY THE*

*REV. JOHN JAMES BONAR, D.D., GREENOCK.*



## Note

### ON DR. BONAR'S PROPHETICAL VIEWS.

IT is almost certain that when a student Dr. Bonar had in some measure looked into the various subjects connected with Eschatology, and even had made up his mind on the topics bearing on "Pre-millenarianism." It was not, however, apparently till later that he examined the august theory in such a manner as revealed it to him in all its fulness and grandeur, and made it nothing less than the pivot on which his spiritual life ever afterwards revolved. We may scarcely be warranted in alleging that it was Irving who gave his mind its direction and impulse in regard to this matter ; but the influence of this interpreter, there can be no doubt, was very great. The minister of Regent Square, London, delivered three series of public lectures on "Unfulfilled Prophecy," in several churches of Edinburgh—St. Andrew's, St. Cuthbert's, and Hope Park, in the years 1828, 1829, and 1830 ; and sought to open up the Apocalypse of John, with its symbols and visions as meant to discover or describe Jesus Christ as the Son and Heir of the Father. These Expositions were given at an early hour of the morning,—some of them at six o'clock. He, who broke in upon the grievous silence of the Church at this time, like the voice of Elias raised from the dead, thrilled the souls of many thousands ; and young and old hastened to ponder the things which were to be realized upon the earth ere the end came. Too many scoffed ; not a few, however, accepted the message brought by the earnest servant of God regarding the

future ; and among these was Dr. Bonar. He listened with his whole heart to the momentous warnings thundered out in the ears of a generation more dead than drowsy.

Upon many of his contemporaries a similar impression was deeply made, and the destiny of our world came to be with them a subject of daily thought, and gave direction to their studies. The twentieth chapter of the Revelation was not only a door through which they looked in awe to descry what lay beyond, but it was the Temple where they saw God in His most august majesty. It became the keynote of their song, the keystone of their system.

Such truths had been held in the early Christian Church, but had in later centuries been forgotten ; and though revived at the Reformation, and taught thereafter for a time, they had not been preached in Scotland for at least a century. But now, with all amplitude and emphasis, Horatius Bonar and others of that day proclaimed that Christ would shine out suddenly from amid the clouds ; that the saints would then hear the Archangel's trumpet and leave their graves ; that Satan, the strong man, would be bound by One far stronger, and cast into the bottomless pit ; that the earth, and all that appertains to it, would be set on fire and purified ; that the era of the Restitution of all things would be at last ushered in, and the evils of the Fall redressed, from the centre to the circumference of our system. In the twentieth chapter of the Revelation we have the era of one thousand years, when Christ reigns with His saints, exhibited as the crisis of our terrestrial future, followed by all the stupendous events occurring before the hour of the Great Judgment which is to terminate our present economy. This is the state of things, or this the group-



ing of events, to which we give the name Pre-millenarianism. Hitherto it had been generally held that all these events and revolutions would transpire as the heralds of Christ Himself; whereas it was from this time announced, and dwelt upon, and pressed on every man that *first of all* Christ would return, and that His return would be the signal of all else that we consider as lying within the orbit of our future.

From the time that Dr. Bonar accepted this mode of prophetic interpretation as taught by Irving, it dominated and complexioned all his views. He might not, after the wave of excitement passed, find a large number to sympathize and side with him, but, no sooner had he himself taken in the full view of all that is involved in the doctrine of the Second Advent, than it became, along with that of the Incarnation and the Atonement, an essential element and well-spring of his inner life.

In the adoption and maintenance of this creed, Dr. Bonar doubtless had to endure no little controversy; but all these discussions were conducted by him with as much gentleness as learning, and his opinions calmly and prayerfully formed were to him as much a matter of personal and tenacious conviction in 1889 as in 1828. He was ever ready to defend and illustrate his views in separate treatises, such as his "Prophetical Landmarks," and his "Coming and Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ," and in the "Journal of Prophecy" which he edited. He nourished his soul upon the blessed hope of Christ's return, and the fragrance of this thought gave richness and solemnity and elevation to all his preaching and to all his poetic writings.

The following extracts are among his latest utterances on prophetic subjects, and show how he adhered to what he believed to be the truth of God.

At the Prophetic Conference at Mildmay in March 1879,\* he said :—

“That eminent theologian of the last century—I mean Jonathan Edwards, of America—in the later days of his ministry recorded in his diary this remarkable experience of his own: ‘I am getting vastly more charitable, and I am getting vastly more uncharitable, in my declining years. So many of whom I had but little hope have stood well, and so many of whom I thought I had every hope have gone back, that I am getting vastly more charitable, and I am getting vastly more uncharitable.’

“Now, I apply this phrase to myself, changing the word *charitable* into *certain*. I speak of course my own experience in this matter. I compromise no one except myself in saying what I do. I am getting, after fifty years’ study of prophetic subjects, vastly more certain, and vastly more uncertain, about certain things in this blessed book of prophecy; and allow me, as briefly as possible, to tell you both my *certainities* and my *uncertainities*, and you will see how strictly they bear upon what I have to say concerning the Master’s testimony.

“I feel greatly more certain as to the Second Coming of the Lord being His Church’s true hope; that is the first thing. I feel greatly more certain, as the years roll on, regarding the Pre-millennial Advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I feel greatly more certain concerning the First Resurrection and the Millennial Reign of Christ. I feel greatly more certain concerning “the Times of the Restitution of all things spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world began.’ I feel greatly more certain concerning ‘the New Heavens and the New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.’ I feel greatly more certain in reference to Israel’s prospects of glory in the latter days, after they have been scattered for eighteen hundred years. I feel greatly

\* See also his addresses at the Conference in Feb. 1878, pp. 13, 128, and 178.

more certain in reference to the doom of Antichrist, whatever that name may include, and doubtless it includes many things. Regarding these things which I have thus briefly enumerated, and on which I should have liked to dwell at length, I feel the power of a demonstration—they form to me a demonstrated creed.

“Then, on the other hand, there are things on which I am more uncertain than I used to be. I thought, thirty or forty years ago, that I had studied thoroughly and settled a great many prophetic questions which now appear unsettled. I feel very uncertain as to prophetic dates, even those on which I used to reckon most surely. I feel more and more uncertain as to the various systems of Apocalyptic interpretation. I confess that I do not adhere to any of the prophetic schools. I am still a learner with regard to the Apocalypse. I am waiting for light, and I believe the Holy Spirit will give it; and that ere long, it may be, we shall understand that marvellous Book, which the Church has age after age tried to comprehend, yet which, I believe, it has hitherto failed, in a great measure, to unravel. I feel, also, very uncertain as to the details of events, and of the relative position and order of events; especially with regard to Israel’s latter-day history. It is not that I do not believe every word that is written as to the latter days of that nation; but I do feel at a loss how to arrange the various things which, at first sight, seem to conflict the one with the other. I feel uncertain as to the personages, or positions, or relationships, connected with the following names which figure in the prophetic Word:—Babylon, Assyria, Edom, Elam, Egypt, Ammon, Moab, Gog and Magog. God has something in the future for all these. I know that; but I confess I stop there. I am not able to say more, or to arrange for the future of these; but there I leave them, and I am quite sure that ere long we shall get light upon them. I believe the event will prove that, with regard to every one of these which I have named, the Holy Spirit has a special meaning in all that He has written concerning their future.

“There is just one thing in connection with this matter which I should like to add, and it is with regard to the certainties, for it applies to the whole, and I should like to avow it solemnly in these days. I feel a vastly greater *certainty*, as years roll on, with regard to the Divine authority and verbal inspiration of the Word of God. If ever, as to these points, a doubt has passed through my mind with respect to this Book, that doubt has disappeared. And then, in connection with this, I feel greater and greater certainty as to the literal interpretation of the whole Word of God, historical, doctrinal, and prophetical. LITERAL, if possible, is, I believe, the only maxim that will carry you right through the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation.”

In a letter to the Conference held in March 1886, to which he was unable to go, on account of illness, he wrote as follows :—

“I know not but that this may be my last opportunity of bearing witness to the much-forgotten doctrine which was so specially given to the Church as her blessed hope, and I wish to say how increasingly important that doctrine seems to me to become as the ages are running to their close, and the power of the great adversary is unfolding itself both in the Church and in the World.

“‘Let us not sleep, as do others ; but let us watch and be sober.’ The awful winding up may be nearer than we think. ‘The harvest of the earth’ is ripe ; and, as for ‘the clusters of the vine of the earth,’ are they not long since ‘fully ripe’? and is it not the great long-suffering of God suspending the execution of wrath, long since overdue, that has stayed the vials of vengeance?

“The Patmos message of our great King and Lord is still sounding in the ear of the Church, ‘He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.’ Shall she not speak loudly out her responsive, ‘Amen! even so, come, Lord Jesus’?”

# List of Writings

*BY DR. HORATIUS BONAR.*

## List of Writings by Dr. Thoratus Bonar.

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*Note.*—This list has been made as complete as possible ; but it will be a favour if any omissions are communicated to the Publishers. Those marked <sup>1</sup> have been translated into French, <sup>2</sup> into German, <sup>3</sup> into Gaelic. It has not been found possible to give a complete list of works translated.

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 acted as editor and wrote many articles.

The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy. 1848-1873.

Christian Treasury, 1859-1879. Johnstone, Hunter & Co.,  
 Edinburgh.

The Border Watch. 1844-1848.

Dr. Bonar wrote many articles for this Periodical.

# Note

*CONCERNING JOHN BONAR, MINISTER OF  
TORPHICHEN, AND HIS DESCENDANTS WHO WERE  
MINISTERS.*

## NOTE

### CONCERNING JOHN BONAR, MINISTER OF TORPHICHEN, AND HIS DESCENDANTS WHO WERE MINISTERS.

**John Bonar**, b. 16th Jan. 1671, at Wester Kilgraston, Perthshire, which had belonged to his ancestors for upwards of a century. Graduated at St. Andrews, 25th June 1689. Ord. minister at Torphichen, 2nd March 1693. D. 7th Aug. 1747. Amid much opposition he adhered throughout life to the religious principles early taught him by his godly mother. During the trying period which preceded the Revolution of 1688, he espoused the cause of Presbyterianism, notwithstanding the efforts of his father and the principal of his college to induce him to become an Episcopalian. In 1712 he refused to take the oath of abjuration; and in 1721 he was one of the twelve ministers who joined in a representation to the General Assembly against the precipitate censure passed on the small treatise, entitled "The Marrow of Modern Divinity." When the harsh measures were agitated in 1732 and 1733, which finally gave rise to the Secession, he was zealous in defence of the censured ministers, though he deprecated their separating from the Church. In 1742, during the remarkable revival in the West of Scotland, though old and feeble, he went to Cambuslang to see the work for himself. He published in 1719 a sermon on the "Duty of Giving," preached at Newhouse, in the Parish of Livingstone; and in 1743 a letter on the "Duty and Advantage of Religious Societies." He was a devoted minister, earnest and simple in his declaration of the truth.

#### *His Son.*

**John Bonar**, b. 25th July 1696. Graduated at Edinburgh, 1st April 1714. Ord. minister at Fetlar and North Yell, 13th Aug. 1729. D. 22nd April 1752. He was a distinguished classical, and Oriental scholar, a firm and decided advocate of Gospel truth; and an impressive preacher. He occasionally wrote poetical compositions.

#### *His Grandsons.*

**John Bonar** (son of the last mentioned John Bonar), b. 4th Nov. 1722. Graduated at Edinburgh, 27th April 1742. Ord. minister at Cockpen, 22nd Aug. 1746. Admitted minister of second charge, Perth, 29th

July 1756. D. 21st December 1761. He relinquished a presentation to Jedburgh in 1756, as the people preferred another minister, for he would not intrude into a charge without consent of the congregation; he also declined a call to the Scotch Church, Rotterdam, in 1759. He published in 1750 "Observations on the Conduct and Character of Judas Iscariot"; in 1752 a sermon on the "Nature and Necessity of a Religious Education"; in 1755 "Analysis of the Moral and Religious Sentiments contained in the Writings of Sopho (Lord Kames) and David Hume"; in 1760 a sermon on the "Nature and Tendency of the Ecclesiastical Constitution of Scotland." At his death he was writing a work to be entitled "The Example of Tyre a Warning to Britain." He drew up in 1760, by request, a memorial as to the institution of an academy in Perth, containing a scheme for technical education. It was the first institution of the kind in Scotland. He was a zealous evangelical preacher, and his writings show him to have been a man of superior talents.

**John Bonar** (son of Andrew Bonar, merchant in Edinburgh), b. 1741. Graduated B.A., took orders in the Church of England, and received an appointment as Chaplain in the Royal Navy. D. in 1786. He published in 1773 a sermon on "The Advantage of the Insular Situation of Great Britain."

*His Great-grandson.*

**Archibald Bonar** (son of John Bonar of Cockpen and Perth), b. 23rd Feb. 1753. Ord. minister at Newburn, in Fife, 31st March 1779. Admitted minister of North West Church, Glasgow, 17th July 1783. Admitted minister of Cramond, 21st April 1785. D. 8th April 1816. In 1796 he published "Genuine Religion the Best Friend of the People"; in 1800 a sermon preached before the Society for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy; and in 1815 a volume of sermons. A second volume was published after his death. He was a man of "spiritual worth and saintly character," and his preaching was able and evangelical.

*His Great-great-grandsons.*

**John Bonar** (son of the above Archibald Bonar), b. 26th July 1801. Ord. minister at Larbert and Dunipace, 11th July 1826. Joined the Free Church of Scotland in 1843. Admitted minister of Free South Church, Aberdeen, 10th December 1846, and in the same year appointed Convener of Colonial and Continental Missions Committee. Admitted minister of Renfield, Glasgow, 16th March 1848, which charge he resigned, 22nd June 1854, and thereafter

devoted himself solely to the duties of said Convenership. Received Degree of D.D. from Rutgers' College, U.S.A., 2nd July 1857. D. 20th December 1863.

**John James Bonar** (son of James Bonar, Second Solicitor of Excise, Edinburgh, who was a man of varied and extensive literary knowledge, and author of several philological treatises), b. 25th March 1803. Ord. minister of St. Andrew's Parish, Greenock, 20th August 1835. Joined the Free Church in 1843. Received degree of D.D. from Edinburgh University, 20th April 1883.

**Boratus Bonar** (son of the last mentioned James Bonar), b. 19th December 1808. Ord. minister of North Parish Church, Kelso, 30th Nov. 1837. Joined the Free Church in 1843. Received degree of D.D. from Aberdeen University, 9th April 1853. Admitted minister of Chalmers Memorial Church, Edinburgh, 7th June 1866. Chosen Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church, May 1883. D. 31st July 1889.

**Andrew A. Bonar** (son of the last mentioned James Bonar), b. 29th May, 1810. Ord. minister of Collace, as assistant and successor of John Rogers, A.M., 20th September 1838. Joined the Free Church in 1843. Admitted minister of Finnieston, Glasgow, 4th December 1856. Received degree of D.D. from Edinburgh University, 22nd April 1874. Chosen Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church, May 1878.

**Andrew Redman Bonar** (son of James Bonar, Accountant of Excise, Edinburgh), b. 28th March 1818. Ord. minister at Fogo in Berwickshire, 26th Sept. 1843. Admitted minister of the Second Charge, Canongate Parish, Edinburgh, 13th March 1845; and of the First Charge of said Parish, 28th Nov. 1849. D. 25th Feb. 1867.

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*Note.*—There are several others of the name of Bonar who have been ministers, but of whose connection with the family of John Bonar of Torphichen there is no definite information. One of these was James Bonar, who graduated at St. Andrews, in 1601, and was presented to the vicarage of Maybole, 1st June 1614. He stood by the side of Alexander Henderson in the great struggle against Prelacy, and took an active part in the General Assembly of 1638. He was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1644. There were also James Bonnar, Relief Church, Auchtermuchty (1754–1788), Lawrence Bonnar, Relief Church, Cupar (1733–1825?), and James Bonnar, D.D., U. P. Church, East Kilbride (1818—).



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